SPACE UNJUST

Socio-Spatial Discrimination in Urban Public Space. Cases from Helsinki and Athens

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY

It is often assumed that public space in the urban context is the common ground where people carry out shared functional and ritual activities, giving a sense of community. However appealing this may seem, in contemporary societies with an increasing awareness of diversity the term community, as well as citizenship and public space, are widely and rightfully challenged.

The starting question is: What does the opposition between *public* and *private* imply? Later on, I will frame this question by concentrating on aspects of socio-spatial segregation; the exclusion of various groups of urbanites who constitute the 'Other' in the city, and whose voices are rarely heard concerning what is their city, too. This research examines the input of some of the sociological discourse on cities, on design practices. Moreover, it questions some of the unquestionable norms of everyday life regarding public and private, the fear of conflicts and urban insurgencies, and the hope for, and apprehension of, inclusive and diverse cities.

The hypothesis is: Spatial design and management influence the affordance of urban public space, allowing and/or resisting the expression of the 'public face' of certain groups of stake holders, such as transnational people. These groups are often perceived as part of the 'Other' in the city. The case studies are the monumental Helsinki Railway Station building in relation to Somali stake holders, and the most famous Greek Square, the Omonia Square in Athens, in relation to Albanian stake holders.

The cities of Helsinki in the north and Athens in the south of Europe provide the ground for research concerning different urban cultures and state policies that shape the physical characteristics of the public domain, the public sphere, and the public space. These geographical choices supply parallel narratives of the design and management of public space, and a certain North-South perspective. The aim is to develop a body of knowledge for sustainable public space design in our cities.

The resource material upon which this research builds is predominantly in the English language; however, resources in Greek and in Finnish language are used too. The research methods rely largely on social sciences and ethnomethodology. Particularly enlightening are the 43 interviews/discussions conducted in Helsinki and Athens with people whose work and perspectives have been a great inspiration and validation for this research. This material is in the archive of the author, and available for inquiries upon request.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

"I want to suggest a different sensibility from the bureaucratic (or regulatory) planning that dominated the twentieth century – a sensibility that is as alert to the emotional economies of the city as it is to the political economies; as alert to city senses (of sound, sight, touch, smell, taste) as to city censuses; as alert to the soft-wired desires of citizens as it is to the hard-wired-infrastructures; as concerned with the lucid as with the productive spaces, indeed seeing these as inseparable and complementary; a sensibility as curious about the spirit of place as it is critical of capitalist excesses; and above all, a sensibility which can help citizens wrest new possibilities from space, and immerse themselves in their cultures while respecting those of their neighbours, and collectively forging new hybrid cultures and spaces. That is my love song to our mongrel cities." (Sandercock 2003, p.10)

Leonie Sandercock (1998a, 2003) has elaborated her ideas of *Cosmopolis* (the multicultural city) in two of her books. Her contribution to the discourse on multicultural societies and on the necessity and enjoyment of living with the 'Other' is important although her preoccupation with culture(s) limits the scope of her perspective. On the one hand she recognizes the significance of socio-economic factors in the shaping of cities; on the other hand she decides to concentrate on underestimated socio-cultural forces. Thus while she avoids the 'chaos' of an all-encompassing discussion, she limits the scope of her focus and chooses to 'ignore' the relational web of fractural and overlapping forces that in constant flux produce countless instances of materialised physical realities. As Ariun Appadurai's (1993) *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes* fragment and overlap, while cultures flow around the world producing multiple worlds real and imagined, the resulting complexity makes microscopic enquiry into any single one of these scapes potentially beneficial as well as myopic. Similarly, a discussion about urban public space, as an institution, a historical continuum, a human construct, and a mental and physical configuration may not meet to

high expectations if it fails to address issues that are as philosophical as commonplace, and as normalised as questionable. This work suffers from a delirious appetite to touch upon phenomena, observe the world, provide links and examples, and change so very little, but bring some change nevertheless. It requires a great effort for a dissertation not to become overly ambitious and expansive. I tried, all considering, to discipline my interests, and my curiosity. The area of my study expanded and shrank numerous times only to acquire the confidence that the field of urban public space itself is so dynamic and multifaceted that the laws of academic propriety may wither away. Sandercock above refers to her utopia, which I partly share. Our cities engender such utopias, not free-standing always, more likely next to or within dystopias.

When in Chania, my small Greek home town, I discovered the Koum-Kapi neighbourhood close to the town centre and the sea, with its poorly maintained housing stock, narrow streets, almost non-existent sidewalks, and an increasing population of foreign residents (some repatriated Greeks from the ex-USSR, but also others), and I saw a vivid community appropriating the area. Children playing in a dead-end street, women on their doorsteps chatting, and one small cavity of a public space transformed into a public living room where mostly men gathered to play cards and backgammon, to drink their home-made coffee, and to talk and talk, next to the cars speeding through what seemed to be for a while an unofficial ghetto. I wanted to approach, observe, and talk to them, but I wasn't confident enough. During my research I got back to that source of inspiration: the foreigner in the city's public spaces and in particular in those of Helsinki and Athens. It is extraordinary how one's personal history curries the potential of one's future endeavours in life. In my case, on more than one occasion during my work I had to revisit intuitions and realise plans and ideas for which I had felt strongly in the past, but did not posses the means to attend to then. Helsinki, Athens and Chania, along with all the cities I have visited and studied, inform my work explicitly and/or implicitly in ways that I am not fully aware of.

My critical presentation of institutions and mentalities that inadequately accommodate inclusive public spaces and spheres is generated by an optimism regarding human agency and socio-spatial change. Henri Lefebvre seemed to think that to change society spatial change is necessary. During my research interviews/discussions, I realised that few experts believe so, and of those who do, many fear that spatial change can mainly facilitate the interests of elites, or that spatial change cannot bring about social change.[1] In my view, and as I hope to demonstrate in this study, the desire for change is the main ingredient for socio-spatial or spatio-social transformations to occur. Such desires give birth to conflicts; they also are generative for socio-spatial transformation.

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[1] Discussion No11, 13.10.2003, with N. an academic from National Technical University of Athens. Discussion No14, 16.10.2003, and discussion No 34, 29.10.2004, with a Greek architect in Athens. Discussion No22, 16.3.2004„ with an official at Helsinki City Planning Office. Discussion No35, 27.10.2004, with an academic at Panteio University in Athens.

My critical analysis of urban public space design and management in Helsinki in the North and Athens in the South of Europe focuses on Appadurai's *ethnocapes and ideoscapes*. Ethnoscapes are urban settings of:

> "[…] persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree." (Appadurai 1993, p.276)

Ideoscapes are urban settings of ideas and concepts that, guided by states, authorities or counter-movements, are profoundly political and share a similar aspiration to shape society.

> "These ideoscapes are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a concatenation of ideas, terms and images, including 'freedom,' 'welfare,' 'rights,' 'sovereignty,' 'representation' and the master-term 'democracy.' The master-narrative of the Enlightenment (and its many variants in England, France and the United States) was constructed with a certain internal logic and presupposed a certain relationship between reading, representation and the public sphere […] But their diaspora across the world, especially since the nineteenth century, has loosened the internal coherence that held these terms and images together in a Euro-American master-narrative and provided instead a loosely structured synopticon of politics, in which different nation-states, as part of their evolution, have organized their political cultures around different keywords […]" (Appadurai 1993, p.279)

The fact that that *ethnoscapes* and *ideoscapes* captured my attention doesn't exclude my attendance to various issues corresponding to other kinds of *scapes*. The visual and sensorial, mediated material that informs our perceptions of the world around us, the information itself and its distribution are crucial in my understanding of the space of image and the image of space in social contexts.[2]

Admittedly, the migration of people and ideas has great transformative powers, and many and unexpected consequences. So much so that cultures or societies that supposedly value hospitality, turn against their foreigners, as they have apparently been doing regarding their 'Others.' Societies that have benefited from multilevel interactions with other peoples and cultures, nevertheless, resort to their alleged 'monoculturalism' and homogeneity in the face

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2 I refer here to a place as imagined through mediated representations, when the latter may become more real than the place itself and its attributes. I present later the case of Omonia Square and its *stigmatisation* due to its alleged Albanisation, and I will enquire into Helsinki Railway Station and its mediated image as a *dangerous* place.

of social diversity. Financial resources account greatly for socio-spatial exclusion and clear-cut discrimination. It is not a coincidence that the 'Other' in its many faces - the socially disenfranchised and the voiceless people of all kinds of 'minorities' - is relatively poor. The dialectics of the case studies of socio-spatial discriminations in urban public space, as well as the theories in this research are driven by social justice, by the voices of those rarely heard, and by the questions rarely asked.

There is a tremendous body of literature that is relevant to this work, though only a modest fragment is reviewed here. As my research evolved, and the closer I came to a conclusion, the more aware I became of people, articles, books, and projects that could have been of help. I put an end to my urge to go through everything -though not totally- when I realised that the ocean of knowledge that bears a relevance to my field of research and study is perpetually expanding. Faced with such a realisation, I often hesitated about my contribution to this ocean. Then I recognised that it is not an ocean one faces but rather smaller seas, or archipelagos easier to navigate. It is this archipelago of socially informed spatial design and management that I hope to enrich with this work. In my archipelago flow many different streams: sociology, geography, philosophy, arts, design, political sciences, environmental psychology, and so on and so forth. I consider the archipelago of urban studies to be this complex and this rich. My contribution therefor is to revisit social urban public space and employ case studies that advance the discourse on more inclusive cities.

...

The work is organized in five parts with several chapters.
The ways I carried out my research, I explain throughout this book; however, a more concentrated account lays in part one. Here I present my methodological anxieties concerning a research that seemed to engender a hybridity. Learning and doing or learning by doing was often the result of the circumstances of my studies, and of doctorate studies in Finland in general, as well as of my personal skills, insufficiencies and determination. The role that many people played is acknowledged already; their contribution in the methodological risks I took is paramount. Harold Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology and Bent Flyvbjerg's (2001) advocacy for case studies make more sense to me through and because of colleagues, informants, friends and teachers. In part one I describe the methods which I used to collect data, to document my research and case studies, and my aspirations. The first part is not as long as the remaining four parts, it is however my attempt to help the reader get acquainted with the kind of research I have conducted. This account is not the ultimate, as what follows the first part hopefully reveals the raison d'être of this work.

The second part concerns the core question of my research; the concepts of public and private. Hanna Arendt (1998) [1958] and her *Human Condition*, Jürgen Habermas (2003) [1962] and his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Nancy Fraser (1992) and her

subaltern counterpublics, Elizabeth Wilson (1991, 2003) and Hille Koskela (1997) with their work regarding women in the cities, and more including Aeschylus and his *Oresteia* from 485 B.C.E., help me in my search for an explanation of the prevalence of the dichotomy between the notions, concepts, institutions, spheres and spaces, of public and private. Since this dichotomy is constructed, I inquire into the multiple ways this construction has been and still is taking place, and how it affects our socio-spatial experience.

The chapters in the second part deal with the dichotomy through different perspectives, some provided by figure-authors, and some provided by research clusters such as women's studies, studies of diaspora, and to a lesser degree queer studies. It is a main preoccupation of part two to examine some of the people who, in one way or another, suffer because of the dichotomy between, and the institutions themselves of, public and private. Women, migrants, homeless, among others, are some of the groups whose position in society determines their position in space in general and in urban public space in particular.

The third part is strongly contextualised, as are the remaining two parts. This part presents my case study concerning an urban public space in Athens, Greece. The place is Omonia Square in the centre of the Greek capital. Chapter by chapter I examine the formation of the Square as a product of social forces, politics, and design. The legal and illegal Albanian immigrants of Athens are the protagonists in this part, as I enquire into the ambiguity and albanisation of the Square, and its contested character as a public space in the employment of identity politics. The ways an institutionalised space of Greek socio-spatial history becomes an appropriated place by the foreign and 'Other' are complex. These are unfolded through the investigation into Greek immigration politics, social norms, religious and cultural traditions, demands for globalisation and national competitiveness, and myriads of top-down decisions often met with forceful protest in this ancient land of democracy.

The issue of multicultural society and politics is examined with the help of, among others, David Harvey (1992) and his critical perspective on social justice in the postmodern city, Iris Marion Young (1990, 2002) and her work on inclusion and democracy, Mike Davis (2000) with his *Magical Urbanism*, Henri Lefebvre (1996, 1997, 2003) and his critique on the socio-spatial, and Rachel Pain (2001) with her *Gender, Race, Age and Fear in the City*. In addition, I relied on Greek scholars such as Iordanis Psimmenos (2004, 2005) with his research on Albanians in Omonia Square, Vasilis H. Karidis (1996) and his research on the criminalisa- tion of Albanians in Greece, and Dimitris Philippides (2002) and his work on para-urbanism. A core question in this and the following part is how the design and management of urban public space allow and/or resist the public expression of urban diversity. A clear-cut answer is not going to be presented; what will be found are decisive clues to further the discourse on socio-spatial discrimination. Many of these clues are provided by my informants to whom I refer in parts three, four, and five.

The Finnish capital Helsinki and the Helsinki Railway Station in the city centre, supply the context of the fourth part. Early on I discuss my research *savoir-faire* in the Finnish context

in order to insert the reader into my perspective. Chapter by chapter in part four the issues at stake are presented in general, and soon after contextualised: migration, the fear in the city, diversity and multiculturalism, rights to the city space, to name but a few. In this part I build upon ideas of, among others, Henri Lefebvre (2003) [1970] and his *Urban Revolution*, Erving Goffman (1972) and his *Microstudies of the Public Order*, Leonie Sandercock (2003) and her multicultural *Cosmopolis*, and Loretta Lees' (1998) *Urban Renaissance*. Manuel Castells and Pekka Himanen (2002) and their work on Finnish information society, and Nuruddin Farah (2000) and his accounts on Somali diaspora, are valuable resources. In addition I rely on Finnish scholars such as Hille Koskela (1997, 1999, 2000) and her research on surveillance and the position of women in public space, Matti Klinge and Laura Kolbe´s (1999) comprehensive work on the history of Helsinki, Marjatta Bell and Marjatta Hietala's (2002) work on the innovative forces found in Helsinki, Panu Lehtovuori's (2005) dissertation about *Experience and Conflict* in public urban space, Hanna Snellman's (2005) ethnographic account of Finnish migrants, and more. Helsinki the stronghold of the Finnish Information Society is analysed through its inclusiveness of, among others, homeless people, ethnic youth, residents of Somali origin, and women. The theoretical discourse on the Finnish context climaxes with the presentation of the ground for my case study of Helsinki Railway Station. The particular context of the Station is described and critically analysed regarding design and management practices and policies, and their contribution to socio-spatial discrimination. This way the ground is also ready to continue into the fifth and last part.

In part five, I present the case study of *Olohuone*, my experimental public installation at Helsinki Railway Station. The visual documentation of *Olohuone* is presented in an almost filmic narrative parallelto the theories, views and perspectives discussed. Understandably this part is dedicated to describing the installation and then procedes to analyse my findings. For the first task my diary presentation of each day of the installation gives an insight into the place, the interactions and some nuanced words and gestures that took place. For the second task I work with ideas from authors such as Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp (2002) and their *Search of New Public Domain*, John Brinkerhoff Jackson (1997b) [1957] and his work on the vernacular in urban space, and Michel de Certeau's (1984) *Practice of Everyday Life*. I rely furthermore on Sharon Zukin (1991, 1995) and her work on the city and power struggles, Marc Augé (1995) and his non-places, Peter Jukes (1990) and his work about the street, Richard Sennett (1991, 2002) on the evolution of city life and Don Mitchell's (2003a) *Right to the City. Olohuone* is the main part of my action research, wherein I framed a situation at the Station and by doing so intervened in and temporarily changed the field which I had been studying. This part is largely a critique of policies for what is called the regeneration of urban public spaces and a comment on the socio-spatial politics of stratification.

PART ONE
METHODOLOGY

1.1 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

"[…] the idea of ethnomethodology is to explore and to make visible the taken-for-granted rules of interpretation that people use in their everyday life as well as the collectively shared assumptions on the basis of which we make sense of different interaction situations." (Alasuutari 1998, p.67)

My research concerns socio-spatial issues of multilayered urban phenomena. Independently, sociology and spatial design merely provide the theoretical context of what my objective has been in this research; the investigation of the implications of design and management in the discrimination taking place in urban public space. Various disciplines contribute to aspects of my research. In the field of art and design, cultural issues are more and more investigated. The problem then is, does one select a scientific methodology from the fields of society and culture and incorporate it in the art and design research, invent new hybrid methods, endlessly improvise being labelled a layperson, give in to 'chilling'?

"[…] in which researchers are deterred from disseminating research results because they anticipate a hostile reaction from colleagues."
(Lees 1993, p.34 in Hoggart et al.2002, p.305)

Soon I realised that the methodological discourse is not fixed, and that methods should be tools, not obstacles. There are calls for researchers' moral responsibilities concerning methodological consistency and academic proficiency. The clout that first offered a hind as to what might be the umbrella methodology for my research came from my early tutor Jun Verwijnen, termed incomprehensibly, to me at that time as *ethnomethodology*.

Harold Garfinkel founded ethnomethodology and his first account of it, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, was published in 1967.

> "The following studies seek to treat practical activities, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning as topics of empirical study, and by paying to the most commonplace activities of daily life the attention usually accorded extraordinary events, seek to learn about them as phenomena in their own right."
> (Garfinkel 1967, p.1)

An explanation of certain aspects of ethnographic and ethnomethodologically informed research is useful here. While reading Nels Anderson's (1975)[3] account of American hobo life, and his sociological research concerning hobos for the University of Chicago in the early 20s, I understood that ethnographic research studies the ways people, as social actors, organise their everyday lives. The researcher directly observes and participates in the field of her/his research with the aim of facilitating the voice of the social actors, and thus acquiring an insider's view in order to make sense, to abstract the specific into the generalisable and context-free. The imposition of theories and preconceptions on the field of study hinders the integrity of the research, while interpreting the data is a whole different story, in need of constant and pedantic justification and theoretical backing. Could it be otherwise, though? Can a researcher study a social field armed only with his interest in compiling the fullest collection of first-hand data? Anderson relied too on his own life as a hobo. An urban ethnographic study then would be expected to compile first-hand data on the ways urbanites[4] manage and organise their everyday lives. In my case, such a research would entail accordingly the study of urbanites' everyday modus operandi in public spaces; however, not necessarily as phenomena in their own right, but rather as data to analyse outside of particular settings and into the general field of the public. In this sense, the commonplace becomes abstractable, and the members on whose commonplace activities, expressions and desires we relied, are decentralised.

> "[…] the possibility of common understanding does not consist in demonstrated measures of shared knowledge of social structure, but consists instead and entirely in the enforceable character of actions in compliance with the expectancies of everyday life as a morality. Common sense knowledge of the facts of social life for the members of the society is institutionalized knowledge of the real world."
> (Garfinkel 1967, p.53)

Ethnomethodologically informed urban ethnography research is the study of urban vernacular life while being part of it, and allowing the everyday life processes of urbanites, as commonplace and unquestioned processes, to lead us and to be *re*-discovered. Such re-

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3 Anderson, N. (1975). *The American Hobo. An Autobiography.* Leiden: E.J. Brill.

4 For an explanation of the term see the prologue for parts three & four.

search investigates into the patterns of interpretation through which urbanites attribute meanings to their own behaviours and methods of conducting their everyday life. It is the perspectives of the urbanites as members of the social field that we study that is important, not our views. A researcher's views would tend to abstract, to generalise, and to miss the specificity of the context within which its members conduct their lives. In ethnomethodology there is no quest for generally applicable rules.

Ethnomethodologically informed research favours the indexical as opposed to the objective, in the sense that the indexical is context-dependant, while the objective is allegedly context-free. Garfinkel himself points to the supposed ambiguity of the indexical within academic or scientific discourse:

> "[…] although indexical expressions 'are of enormous utility' they are 'awkward for formal discourse'; […]" (Garfinkel 1967, p.5)

In a sense, grounding research in specific contexts, and specific people, and in order not to fail them, requires that the research itself speak of their concerns in intelligible ways. In a specific context a method used by members to deal with a situation in their everyday life doesn't become a general rule; the same applies for a sign, a gesture, or a pattern. This refusal to institutionalise by generalising findings in ethnomethodology may explain the idea according to which order is something illusory.

> "Ethnomethodologists start out with the assumption that social order is illusory. They believe that social life merely appears to be orderly; in reality it is potentially chaotic. For them social order is constructed in the minds of social actors as society confronts the individual as a series of sense impressions and experiences which she or he must somehow organise into a coherent pattern." (Poore 2000, p.1)[5]

Therefore, a preconceived order would jeopardise the ethnomethodologically informed research, as it would imply the imposing of a framework outside from the field setting. The context is paramount, and within it we are looking to rediscover the commonplace and everyday; everything we need is in front of us. Ethnomethodology advocates a preoccupation with what the members of a certain context or field express, mean, feel and aspire to while conducting their everyday lives; however, not pondering on questions of subjectivity and objectivity, or of what is scientific and what not, ethnomethodology addresses the main issue of relevance. What is the relevance of conducting ethnographic research in the first place, and then, what is the relevance of the data and how should they lead the research?

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5 Poore, S. (2000). *Ethnomethodology. An Introduction.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.hewett.norfolk.sch.uk/ CURRIC/soc/ethno/intro.htm *(Accessed: 25 December 2006).*

These are all pressing questions. Here lies the amorality of ethnomethodology, as the researcher collects data; s/he doesn't pass judgments, produce generally applicable findings or correctives, but rather concentrates on the field and its members' conduct within the specific setting. In my research action assumed an important role. Whether looking through literature, media and the press, conducting discussions and interviews, or setting up *Olohuone*, my aim was to find arguments that would support my advocacy for change regarding the ways we deal with the sociospatial. Research without such a quest for change is not possible. While Garfinkel's (1967) abstinence from moral judgments is understandable – as is his willingness, for instance, to report his encounter with transgender Agnes as detachedly as possible – his detachment could be seen as a safe compliance too.

> "Ethnomethodological studies are not directed to formulating or arguing correctives. […] They do not formulate a remedy for practical actions, as if it was being found about practical actions that they were better or worse than they are usually cracked up to be. Nor are they in search of humanistic arguments, nor do they engage in or encourage permissive discussions of theory." (Garfinkel 1967, p.viii)

Often urged to be less personal and subjective in this research, I complied out of fear; for the most part, though, I still prefer the first person, and for that I was encouraged too.

Garfinkel (1967), while describing the coding of data of a specific research is revealing:

> "But, instead of assuming that coders, proceeding in whatever way they did, might have been in error, in greater or lesser amount, the assumption was made that whatever they did could be counted correct procedure in some coding 'game.'" (Garfinkel 1967, p.20)

The coders coded according to ad hoc considerations which in their turn were organised according to the relevance of what the coders thought were relevant to the research. In a way, the coders found a method of data organisation within the field of their research. Reflexivity then seems to me to be a combined process of a contextualised investigation wherein the researcher is as much a member of the field of research as the people whose everyday conduct and reasoning(s) the researcher investigates. In this sense reflexivity requires the full consciousness of the researcher, and there lies a great challenge for balancing the expressiveness of the researcher who investigates and the representation of those investigated. Garfinkel uses 'members' to refer to all social actors, which includes researchers too.

> "For members doing sociology, to make that accomplishment a topic of practical sociological inquiry seems unavoidable to require that they treat the rational

properties of practical activities as 'anthropologically strange.' By this I mean to call attention to 'reflexive' practices such as the following: that by his accounting practices the members familiar, commonplace activities of everyday life recognizable as familiar, commonplace activities; that on each occasion that an account of common activities is used, that they be recognized for 'another first time'; that the member treat the processes and attainments of 'imagination' as continuous with the other observable features of the settings in which they occur; and of proceeding in such a way that at the same time that the member 'in the midst' of witnessed actual settings recognizes that witnessed settings have an accomplished sense, an accomplished facticity, an accomplished objectivity, an accomplished familiarity, an accomplished accountability, for the member the organizational hows of these accomplishments are unproblematic, are known vaguely, and are known only in the doing which is done skilfully, reliably, uniformly, with enormous standardization and as an unaccountable matter." (Garfinkel 1967, p.9-10)

The majority of recent publications on methods for social, cultural, and qualitative research make it clear that methods are not fixed; they are developing and changing, and are appropriated, sometimes successfully sometimes not. I am inclined to believe in the hybridity of a methodology that is part and parcel of a research, rather than of a research that complies with a certain methodology. At this point maybe idiosyncrasies matter. It is worth noting that transdisciplinarity for me has been an opening-up concept; opening up to different approaches of acknowledged methods. Regarding research compliance to methodologies, Layder (1996) similarly discusses the issue of research compliance to theories. In *New Strategies for Social Research*, Layder talks about the kind of research that generates "theory that fits the data," rather than "to find data to fit the theory" (Layder 1996, p. 45). This is called the *grounded theory* approach, and offers another perspective to the issue of the relationship between the researcher and the research data.

> "The researcher interested in developing grounded theory is 'an active sampler of theoretically relevant data', rather than 'an ethnographer trying to get the fullest data on a group' [Glaser and Strauss] (1971: 183)." (Layder 1996, p.44)

Therefore, despite the literature that inspired me early on to navigate within my research interests, soon the field-work guided me to more specific literature. Literature in turn provided theories that mobilised a critical understanding of the data at hand as well as the theories themselves. Presenting both fieldwork and theories, in something that often resembles a bricolage, I intend to take them further as an ever-developing entity; similar to what Layder presents as one of the propositions of grounded theory:

> "[…] theory should be viewed as a constant and flexible accompaniment to the incremental collection of data and the unfolding nature of the research. These, then, represent the main features of grounded theory." (Layder 1996, p.45)

The aim of my research has not been to develop a grounded theory; however, it is part of my *contribution to knowledge* to make certain links between theorised practise and theory in practice, which may shed more light on socio-spatial discrimination in urban public space.

My Ethnomethodology

Earlier I wrote that an urban ethnographic study would be expected to compile first-hand data on the ways urbanites manage and organise their everyday lives, and in my case such a research would entail accordingly the study of urbanites' everyday modus operandi in public spaces. In this sense, the commonplace becomes abstractable, and the members on whose commonplace activities, expressions and desires we relied, are decentralised.

   I would like to demonstrate that my ethnomethodology hasn't been consistent with The Ethnomethodology of Garfinkel or others. Too many decentralisations took place and inconsistencies occurred concerning research choices, and ways of managing my work. I have been consistent with my hypothesis and my case studies, while I have been inconsistent with the ethnomethodological principle of focusing on the phenomena as such of my members' conduct in their everyday practices in public spaces. In retrospect it may be questioned if the phenomena I concentrated on coincidently affirmed my hypothesis – because of how well grounded my hypothesis has been – or if I selected the phenomena that would affirm my hypothesis. Ethnomethodologically speaking, the way I worked with my case studies of socio-spatial discrimination in urban public space may be questioned too. I chose Omonia Square and the Helsinki Railway Station as my case studies on a purely interest basis. My decision therefore was not a primary but a complimentary one; the case studies would be the settings that would test/prove my hypothesis. Of one thing I am certain; my research enquiries into my case studies proved enormously rewarding, while my interaction with other stake holders in the research settings gave rise to issues of research ethics and transparency of the research. In early cases this was mainly because I wasn't confident myself. Increasingly though my interaction (forty-three documented discussions) with experts and non-experts helped me to think and rethink my research and my position.

   Bent Flyvbjerg (2001)[6] shows the hypothesis testing as well as the hypothesis generative potentials of the case study method; as Sandercock writes:

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6 See Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter.*
Cambridge: University Press.

"[…] with its thick description of character and events, its microscopic detail […]" (Sandercock 2003, p.238)

Hypothesis testing is inextricably connected to, if not a thick, at least a rich description; multi-level and nuanced. It is according to each researcher's skills how thick, rich, and convincing or challenging, her/his *story* will be.

"[…]But the action of the scientists, since it acts into nature from the standpoint of the universe [detached and distant] and not into the web of human relationships, lacks the revelatory character of action as well as the ability to produce stories and become historical, which together form the very source from which meaningfulness springs into and illuminates human existence." (Arendt 1998, p.324)

This may be an encouragement to find the revelatory character and the ability to produce stories and become historical, to become public, to be exposed and confronted. The relevance of Arendt's words is striking for scholars like Forester (2000) and Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003) who have talked about radical planning, deliberative practice and storytelling as well as listening to the voices of difference. Arendt has provided a most fertile starting ground for this discussion.

Case Studies

"Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals." (Flyvbjerg 2001, p.73)

Based on the five misunderstandings that Flyvbjerg (2001, p.66-67) registers as misleading simplifications of the validity of the *case study* and *casing* as a research method, I understand the case study as an instrumental method to carry out socially informed research. In the study of sociospatial issues and human affairs partaking in the formation of urban public space at a particular time there can only be contextualised enquiry. Therefore, choosing my case studies has been, I am afraid, more intuitive than conscious and this is why I felt the need to justify it only at the end of my research. The case study is grounded and context-dependent contributing to the production of knowledge that has potentially general value regardless if there in one case study or more. It is rather the kind of case study, as well as the depth of the inquiry, that is decisive as to its (overestimated) generalizability. Still, as with ethnomethodology, a case study researcher need neither discard nor crave for generalizability. A case study is as valid for generating preliminary research hypothesis, as it

is for testing hypotheses or constructing theory. A case study doesn't confirm a researcher's presuppositions or prejudices any more than any other widely accepted research method. It depends on the casing, the intuition and skills of a researcher to make a story that is coherent, industrious and dialectically open to new interpretations. New interpretations mean that an openness or open-mindedness inherent in the method challenges the case study research; however, even if it seems that a falsified case study may be undermined by scrutiny, it also acquires undeniable value as it does contribute to knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2001) in his case study of Aalborg planning politics shows that both well and ill meant scrutiny of his research results made him more attentive and reflexive.[7]

> "For researchers, the closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important in two respects. First, it is important for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behaviour cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process, and in much theory. Second, cases are important for researchers' own learning process in developing the skills needed to do good research. […] Great distance from the object of study and lack of feedback easily lead to a stultified learning process, which in research can lead to ritual academic blind alleys, where form becomes more important than the content. As a research method, the case study can be an effective remedy against this tendency."
> (Flyvbjerg 2001, p.73)

With the case study method nothing is prescribed or predetermined. In its best application, the case study is a learning method for the researcher that unfolds and reveals itself step by step. Depending on the choice of case study, certain ideas may be confirmed or falsified more easily or sooner. Case studies have often shown in practice that they are an excellent means to better understand situations, and to generate questions, ideas, and discussions that invite for more or less engaging interest, thoughtful inquiry and knowledge.

As Garfinkel (1967) explains with the coders' example, my case studies and the way I approached them could be seen as the best at the particular places and times and in regard to the social actors involved, including myself. If a case study is a longitudinal in-depth investigation of a phenomenon at a certain place and time, then it seems to me that the case study method complements ethnomethodological research. Garfinkel (1967) demonstrates the use of case studies with his work on transgender Agnes, elaborating on the ways gender naturalisation takes place through conscious everyday decision making. Agnes' life acts as

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[7] Reading Flyvbjerg's (2001) account on his study case of Aalborg I would like to believe that having opened up his research to public scrutiny, if his results were proving weak, he would have had the reflexivity to reconfigure his research and even admit to his shortcomings. As it happened Flyvbjerg's case study research was a success.

an extreme case of a transgender individual's gendering and sexualisation processes within a specific social setting. In this sense the exceptional brings forth the normative. Garfinkel avoids generalisations, though not totally, especially at instances where he seeks for analogies between Agnes and *naturally* male or female.

> "Critical cases: To achieve information which permit logical deductions of the type, 'if this is (not) valid for this case, then it applies to all (no) cases.' Paradigmatic cases: To develop a metaphor or establish a school for the domain which the case concerns."
> (Flyvbjerg 2001, p.79)

In my research, Omonia Square and the Helsinki Railway Station are critical and paradigmatic cases of urban public spaces that contain social discriminations. They are also critical cases in the sense that they are places of unique importance within the urban context of Athens and Helsinki respectively. Together these two cases act in a cumulative way, as my study of Omonia Square and Helsinki Railway Station took place at different times and retrospectively each case informed the other. Finally the two cases are presented in a story telling way, divided in themes and sub themes. Although I tend to view the case study of Omonia Square in Athens as secondary to the one of Helsinki Railway Station, this is only because the latter has been a more accessible field of study for me due to the fact that during the time of my doctoral research I have been living in Helsinki and not in Athens. On the other hand, I have been more able to take advantage of Greek than Finnish literature. My research in Omonia was as intense as the field-work at the Station, despite the fact that it took place during short field trips.[8]

The concluding case study of my research involves *Olohuone*, my installation at the Helsinki Railway Station. This was an urban experiment within the field of my research in Helsinki and a testing case study, which I planned, realised and documented closely. With *Olohuone* my effort was to test the theoretical and practical observations and conclusions I had reached by the later stage of my research. Finally, this concluding case study is part of my action research, with which I intervened in the research field. I changed the attributes of an area of the research field, and thereafter participated in the field as well as directly observing the rest of the stake holders. As it happened, *Olohuone* proved to be a critical case study for my research and field-work, partly because it affirmed the concept of domestication, but mainly because of the other people's responses.

The case studies I selected grounded my research; I didn't have to talk only in a generalised theoretical manner and this in turn became part of my interpretation of action work with all

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[8] Primarily due to funding limitations.

its consequences of judgment, and desires to challenge and change. The norms I often refer to as the focus of my critical analysis weren't the phenomena as such of my study; I developed a further aspiration to intervene and bring change. Such a decentralisation, though it occurred, was not among my aims; instead my aim was to investigate the field. Through my notes, diaries and taped discussions, I tried to revive my subjects' and interlocutors' ways of managing and organising their everyday lives in public spaces. I did not purposefully allow my interlocutors with their ideas, desires and aspirations, to lead my work. This however, did occur and my interaction with members of the field and with interlocutors reaffirms my work. There were a few occasions on which my interlocutors challenged my work; however, in retrospect their input has been rather in line than against my hypothesis. The few times that my research principles and preconceived ideas were challenged were very important milestones as I faced my inadequacies, many of which I tried to counter-balance.

Regarding a project of doctoral research, decentralisations lead in quite the opposite direction from consistency and strict focus that are widely advocated. A hypothesis has to be produced early on and thereafter to be tested through theoretical and practical challenges. A hypothesis suggests a presupposition; an assumption that hopefully correlates with the researcher's interest. On the other hand, a researcher working ethnomethodologically would rather define a field and let the everyday commonplaceness of the members of that field to lead her/him. *My* ethnomethodology is therefore a mongrel; I complied with the academic savoir-faire and produced my research hypothesis, then I proceeded to decide on the specific fields and members I thought relevant to investigate, according to my research interests, and according to the suggestions of my teachers and other members.

> "Ethnomethodology involves examining the ways people produce orderly social interaction on a routine, everyday basis. It is concerned with the study of the 'common-sense reasoning skills and abilities through which ordinary members of a culture produce and recognize intelligible courses of action' (Heritage 1989:21)."
> (Hoggart et al. 2002, p.309)

With my research I attempt to investigate the ways discrimination is produced and experienced in urban public space. I agree with the undertone of subjectivity in the above definition of ethnomethodology. In addition, I agree with Alasuutari (1995) when he explains that within ethnomethodology the *responsible* researcher would not interpret her/his data while collecting them. This interpretation takes place anyway in everyday life, therefore this is a layperson's interpretation of meaning: I see, I interpret, I respond (Alasuutari 1995, p.36). Researchers justifiably avoid being characterised as laypersons since they compete for academic and scientific authority and recognition. The point though is that first of all researchers don't compete on the same *flat* ground of one genre of research. There are instead an increasing number of research projects that enrich our knowledge on different levels of

even the same area of study. The competition, though, exists more and more as research-ers have to fight for funding. It is in this aspect of research that standardisation is most in demand for comparability, and justification of funding allocation. Alasuutari makes another point concerning the ethnomethodological research and the un-interpreted and therefore pure observable clues;

> "Because of migration and the world economy, for instance, different cultures in-teract and mix with each another, not least through the mass media. The continu-ing movement towards internationalization will certainly make it more and more difficult to retain one's faith in naively self-evident meanings, interpretations and identities." (Alasuutari 1995, p.37)

This is important for me and my work, because Alasuutari brings to the foreground a kind of ethnomethodology that better describes my research methodology.

I felt it to be an oxymoron the fact that I conducted a large part of my research while reading or writing in the solitude of my thoughts. It turns out that one need not be a woman to write about women, a man to write about men, a hobo to write about hobos, and so on and so forth.[9]

1.2 DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Very early on during my research, meeting and discussing about issues of public space with experts and non-experts became important. The reasons are described below.

Being influenced by Lefebvre's and De Certeau's writings on the city, and by the concept of everyday life practices in the making of social space, I was motivated to seek information through personal contact with people from a wide spectrum. Most of the contacts took place in public spaces, and most of the interlocutors didn't have prior notice concerning the exact questions; they were aware though of basic facts concerning my research. The concept of every day practices, as I interpreted it, helped to roughly plan my field research; it became important to directly observe public spaces in general and in particular the Railway Station in Helsinki and Omonia Square in Athens. In fact, looking for clues regarding my research soon underlined the importance of certain information deriving from formal and informal sources. What people thought about public space and possible discrimination became as important to me as what the literature resources revealed.

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[9] Habermas (2004) in his commemorative lecture in Kyoto demonstrates the private nature of his character despite his work on public sphere. See Habermas, J. (2004). *Public Space and Political Public Sphere - the Biographical Roots of Two* *Motifs in My Thought. Commemorative Lecture, November 11th 2004, Kyoto.* [Online]. Available at: http://homepage.mac.com/gedavis/JH/Kyoto_lecture_Nov_2004.pdf (Accessed: 12 April 2007).

A large amount of the literature resources relevant to my research were in the Finnish language. Many authors of influential monographs, researchers who had published reports, policy makers, social scientists, and others who had perspectives interesting for this research, were Finnish. My Finnish language skills couldn't but fail any effort to understand and use this body of work concerning public space in the Finnish context. This handicap was a prime motivation for organising and conducting as many discussions as possible with Finnish experts, with whom I could engage in a dialogue in English. The language barrier, unfortunately, became very evident during a period of a year when I was trying to engage in discussions with Somali people living in Helsinki. I realised though that the language was only one of the issues that made Somali people not accept even an open invitation I announced in a free Englsih-speaking monthly magazine in Finland. Nevertheless, after a lot of effort a few Somalis were persuaded to accept an invitation for a discussion; in one particular case it took me one year to actually persuade a Somali woman for a meeting. In the case of Athens the situation was understandably easier, as Greek is my mother tongue.

Meeting and discussing issues of public space with people of refugee and immigrant background was an immense source of inspiration and valuable data for this research. Talking about discrimination in public space wouldn't be possible without talking with some of the people who more or less belonged to stigmatised groups and thus might have suffered sociospatial discrimination. This explains also my persistent efforts to meet people from Somalia in Helsinki, and from Albania in Athens. The difficulties I encountered in Athens were unrelated to language barriers; some Albanians felt the need to talk as representatives of Albanian immigrants in Greece, i.e. as political activists. In certain cases, due to the tension between Greeks and Albanians, some felt the need to justify themselves. Finally, again due to the before mentioned tensions, the subject of discrimination in public space was very delicate; it stirred up expressions of bitterness. In retrospect, the interviews with the supposedly non-expert stake holders were very indicative of the differences of the livelihoods of Somali refugees and Albanian immigrants in two very different welfare states in the North and the South of Europe.

My research builds on a social awareness about public space in European cities. It has been a challenging undertaking considering that there was, and there still is, a very big knowledge deficit. Although my drive for a socially informed research was forceful, social sciences were never part of my previous academic training as an architect and designer. This, I discovered, wasn't only a personal shortcoming but one that widely concerned the fields of architecture and design. Talking with experts and discussing about the issues that concerned my research "opened" my eyes to quite a few perspectives of how to deal with my questions. Then my deficit little by little became manageable; not only I could orientate my resource material in relation to my work, I had also a challenging research perspective worthy of argumentation and further investigation. In addition, the fact that amongst my forty-three interlocutors there were some who seemed suspicious

and/or cautious of my research interest and questions, who at a couple of times openly attacked my research initiative as well as my social sciences deficit, made me build up my courage, question my research frequently, and expand my literature search in different fields.

"Being out there" as much as I could, trying to instigate discussions with non-experts about issues that were so fleeting and temporary, traumatic at times, often seemingly unimportant, was a great learning experience with quite some impact on this research and on me. In the context of my research I was an interlocutor in the forty-three discussions/interviews I had inititated. I used to feel more comfortable using the term "free-form interviews," or "open-ended interviews," still neither of these terms is satisfactory. An interview, whether strict and based on a questionnaire or free and open ended, is still a one-way effort of the interviewer to elicit valuable data from the interviewees. Many times that was exactly what I was doing. However, discussing with people who were not only informants but also interlocutors, who were also partners in this "engagement," engendered the acceptance of an uncertainty, vulnerability and interdependence. My efforts therefore were not to conduct qualitative interviews, as described by Alasuutari (1995), that could take place with people from different backgrounds; my idea was to invite people for a dialogue in what imight be called "reflexive interviews." This means, of course, that I and my partners were, in the most successful cases, interacting in equal terms. I tried to avoid giving answers to my own questions, and unfortunately only in few cases I too was asked questions.

Often my interlocutors were puzzled by my spontaneity, something that in most cases, though, turned out to be a key for relaxed communication. This has been one of the reasons why I avoided any kind of recording, apart from very few cases, and instead kept notes of my interlocutors' ideas. In this way I am afraid, my participation in the actual discussions was restricted as I was partly occupied taking notes, and on the other hand I did not record my own participation. In my notes there are remarks concerning people's emotional reactions only in the recorded discussions. In this respect I would have preferred to use some of the available recording techniques if I could be certain that this wouldn't negatively influence the discussions. As far as I understood, a tape recorder or a camera would have indeed, as it did in a case or two, influence the discussions; an example is that the people recorded were more conscious of what they were saying. At times I felt that one was trying to please me, another became more formal, or very hesitant, and another got disturbed by the apparatuses and the interest we attracted. I still think that the recorded discussions are valid and interesting despite their shortcomings.

My inexperience concerning "research interviews" has proved very disheartening in a few cases, one in particular, when carried away by my interest I wasn't keeping track of formalities, as I should have. I learned the hard way that when discussing, with experts especially, there should be a clear-cut agreement and consent, as to what we are doing and what for. I never presented my interlocutors with written agreements in need of their signature. Instead, and according to my cultural background based on ritual more than contractual relations, as Lefebvre and Régulier (1996) describe it, I said that if they agreed I was going to use the

material as part of my research. Anonymity would be kept in all cases, apart from those that consent was expressed to use names. In these last cases, the interlocutors had the possibility to read my texts referring to them before any publication. As it happened, very few were interested after all, while most didn't respond when they were sent material referring to our discussions. This is the reason why I keep all of my interlocutors anonymous, even if in certain cases their words may be revealing. Since my interlocutors come from different countries and nationalities I thought it helpful for the reader to mention their country of origin.

The transcripts of the forty-three discussions I have stored as a separate source accessible upon request. All my ideas as well as these discussions are open to new links and interpretations; the research problematic is thick and pretending to conclude it can only be deceiving.

1.3 NOTES AND REFERENCES

All through my research I have been keeping research notebook-diaries. Within my notebooks I have written my field notes as well as notes of all my discussions. My field notes concerning Athens were neither standardised, as to present separately my observations and my comments, nor strictly scheduled. They were sampling the field of Omonia Square trying to see a familiar space with new eyes. My interlocutors in addition provided me with their perceptions of Omonia. I admit that the undertaking of writing up the part on Omonia Square using my field-notes, discussions, illustrations, and literature, was perplexed and indicative of the alleged distinction between the then and the now, and 'field' and 'home'(Hoggart et al. 2002, p.286-7). The fact that my dissertation is written in Helsinki where my *home* currently is, while part of my field work took place thousand of miles away in Athens, made me conscious of my position in the context of my research, not only as an active researcher but also as part of the field as such.

My fieldwork in Omonia was mainly conducted between 2002 and 2004, and in three short field trips. Due to the lack of financial resources, my limited time in Athens led me to be as industrious as possible. This brings in already a weakness of my research, especially in relation to Malinowski's (1922) insistence on long fieldwork. Although Malinowski refers to participant observation while I consider my fieldwork more as direct observation, I still see his point as Alasuutari explains it:

> "It is thought that a long duration of the field enables the researcher to observe people in their 'natural habitat' or 'authentic' situations, even though the researcher is one of the people present." (Alasuutari 1996, p.56)

This is a handicap that I will have to live with; I try to compensate for the lack of time with frequent reference to my interlocutors' words, as well as the visual data that are also refer-

ences for the field of study. Therefore in Athens I conducted several long, individual discussions; some were semi-structured, but most of them were thematic, free-form, open-ended and reflexive interviews. For the majority of these discussions I didn't use any recording apparatuses. Instead I took notes that I later transcribed. I am aware of the disadvantage of "double hermeneutics," as I present an interpretation of an interpretation of an experience lived by my interlocutors.[10] Despite this difficulty, I refer to this material as evidence from personal stories (my interlocutors' and mine) and as a source of inspiration for this work. Only two interviews/stories I recorded in Greece when my interlocutors were invited to show me *their* Omonia Square, and three in Helsinki, two of them at Helsinki Railway Station. I hope one day soon to edit and present this material, some of which I find particularly moving.

In addition, I collected published and unpublished[11] research relevant to my work, mostly from the fields of sociology and urban planning, as well as articles in the press. The document analysis for my research includes newspaper articles and official reports on policy and policy advice. I am particularly interested in reports concentrating on the future of Finland, a field well developed and appreciated in the country. In addition, press articles concerning the Helsinki Railway Station, immigrants and Helsinki centre are enlightening.

Within the sections on my fieldwork in Athens, I also refer to fiction, such as a novel and two related movies; their input is for me as valuable as the rest of the material and scholarly resources since they are visualised outcomes of research, lived experiences and story-telling concerning Albanian immigrants in Greece in general and in Athens in particular.[12] Finally, I have dedicated as much time as I could to documenting the area of Omonia by photographing and videotaping. Some of this material is included in the body of this work as illustrations.

1.4 VISUAL DOCUMENTATION

The illustrations in this book are important for reasons that I have never really scrutinised. Here I will briefly attempt to present my aspirations for producing visual and audio-visual documentation for my research, as well as the role of the illustrations in this book. I will refer to a widely accessible text, *Photography and Sociology* by a pioneer of visual sociology, Howard S. Becker (1974).[13] Becker refers to the roles of photographers and social scientists and how they could benefit from each others' work. I am neither a social scientist nor

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[10] Hoggart, K., Lees, L. and Davies, A. (2002). *Researching Human Geography*. London: Arnold, p.210.

[11] I refer here to the postgraduate research carried out in the National Technical University of Athens concerning urban space and society, particularly the research by Rea Orfanou (1999, 2001), H. Konstantatos (2001), and Nikos Georgopoulos (1999).

[12] In Athens I interviewed the author of the novel and the director of one of the films I refer to. Discussions No30, 26.10.2004, and discussion No37, 4.11.2004, respectively.

[13] Becker, H. S. (1974). *Photography and Sociology*. [Online]. Available at: http://shiva.uniurb.it/EUREX/visual_lab/visual_lab.htm (Accessed: 19 January 2007).

a photographer, nevertheless what I do with my visual documentation in my research is in-formed by, and could be included in, what Becker describes. As I understand it, visual sociol-ogy is the product of systematic collaboration between photography and sociology, wherein photography and sociological concepts consciously intertwine and provide an imagery of the society they study. It is one more area that I practiced intuitively in my previous studies, and then more systematically in my doctorate studies. My architectural studies included some limited training in photographic expression, and less in technicalities of photography. Early on I understood that my view on what I wanted to capture was decisive for the photographic results, in the sense that what I captured in my pictures was the result of a cognitive process. The requirements for technical skills were important; however, with the automatic function of the cameras, technical skills were less and less of an obstacle for those of us, amateur photographers, who wanted to "make nice pictures."[14] Much later and after quite a few tri-als I discovered the narrative potential of pictures not as simply the substitute of 'a thousand words,' as in the popular saying, but as a tool to create an imagery of my concepts. Although rarely praised or encouraged for my photographic skills, I continued and still continue to take pictures most of the times having a conceptual and theoretical framework in mind. In my dis-sertation, I use photographic and audio-visual material as a means to record and collect data and in a few cases, in conferences and seminars, I have presented this material as supportive visualisations to my theoretical argumentation.

What do I want to accomplish?
Becker (1974), talking about how social scientists can train in order to be able to work with visual material suggests an exercise. After a longer than usual viewing of a picture, one is encouraged to make a story about the more detailed impression of the picture. The story, Becker says, need not be true;

> "[…] it's just a device for externalizing and making clear to yourself the emotion and mood the picture has evoked, both part of its statement." (Becker 1974, p.7)

My aim is that the reader of my verbal deliberation sees the photographs as I have placed them in the text and reflects on them, and maybe sees more than the words reveal. We never fully see a photograph unless we try. Through time I have used certain photographs over and over again in certain contexts. I have built, therefore, a mental visual library that, although it helps me to unfold what I think is a coherent imagery of my concepts, it nevertheless blinds me in regard to the different potentials and readings of these photos. My favourite example for this are pictures of security guards and surveillance cameras in urban public spaces; to me

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[14] In my experience, the use of digital cameras has made it easier to photograph busy public spaces where the setting is constantly changes.

these are indicators of police states, to another observer the same photographs may signify safety, or evoke feelings of anxiety, and so on.

This brings me to the crucial issue of the truthfulness of photographing, with more or less clear sociological concepts in mind. A researcher making photographs should not bend his/her ideas to fit her/his photographic findings, or

> "[…] let his theories dominate his vision, especially at the moment of shooting, but rather that his theories will inform his vision and influence what he finds interesting and worth making pictures of." (Becker 1974, p.14)

I recognise two interesting aspects here; first, that the photographer's ideas influence the pictures taken, and secondly that this already limits the 'objectivity' of the pictures. According to Becker the problem is not insurmountable. There are certain realisations that we have to make in order to embrace the photographic material as worthy evidence of social concepts and phenomena. I didn't frame the photographs I made in urban public spaces; by this I mean that I didn't ask the anonymous people in my frames to act in a certain way. My control was expressed otherwise, in the decisive moments I chose to press the shutter. I don't claim that the photographs I have made are the whole truth; however, they are true (Becker 1974, p.15).

> "Remember that theory is itself a sampling device, specifying what must be incorporated into a full description." (Becker 1974, p.16)

In this respect, indeed, I left certain aspects undocumented; as I was narrowing down my research to specific socio-spatial fields, I 'zoomed in' on the Helsinki Railway Station and Omonia Square, even when at times I actually 'zoomed out,' as in Omonia Square. I was interested in certain kinds of situations where the oppressive policies of the design and management of public space were traceable. Becker (1974, p.18) considers public places to be easier for a fieldworker to take pictures in unobtrusively. I mentioned earlier that I could not stage my pictures exactly because they were in urban public places; however, this did not eliminate the feeling of intruding in anonymous people's lives. In fact, the more I photographed busy public spaces the more aware I became of the intrusion I caused, to the point of clear annoyance that in one case resulted in a violent attack. In this particular case, as I had to do on a few other occasions, I explained that my intention was not to harm anyone and that I was a student; the fact remains that I was vulnerable and naïve. That attack was a substantial lesson for me, and determined my relationship with the field of my study. This occurrence explains also the detachment or coldness which characterises many of my pictures; it is not unfair to say that it is with this kind of detachment that most of us in our everyday lives perform our activities in urban public spaces. On very few occasions – when uninhibited

children were in my camera frame – I found that reciprocity of interest was accomplished; in most cases the sense was that of accessing the inaccessible. The result of the above considerations is that often my photographs have a randomness, while most of the time I was making them thinking of thematic units. During *Olohuone*, my installation at the Station, I did however systematically document the field of my case study in set periods of time, taking notes of my observations on the spot, and making photographs.

> "Sociologists tend to deal in large, abstract ideas and move from them (if they do) to specific observable phenomena that can be seen as embodiments, indicators, or indices of those ideas. Photographers, conversely, work with specific images and move from them (if they do) to somewhat larger ideas. Both movements involve the same operation of connecting ideas with something observable, but where you start makes a difference."
> (Becker 1974, p.20)

On the whole, the photographs I made were not illustrations of theoretical concepts; they were rather visual means in support of ideas and arguments I present within this body of work. However, I do want to create context-based imagery for socio-spatial discrimination in the city. The degree to which these images correspond to social reality is grounded in my theoretical analysis and they reflect the world as I see it through theory and praxis.
The photographic material is part of my action research in the sense that what I frame in my photographs acts as a catalyst for my critical analysis, with the ambition to bring change in the fields that I am studying. Aspiring for socio-spatial change does not imply a hopeless inactive present. I see hope and potential especially through the words of my informants; human agency and determination for socio-spatial change are far too important to discard in the name of urban doom.

> "The political effect comes about when we take what we have defined, for scientific convenience, as unchanging, as in fact unchangeable. We thus, implicitly or explicitly, suggest to those who think that some particular change is the way to solve a pressing problem, that their solution is utopian and unworkable. What we are really saying, in such a case, is that the phenomenon in question can only be affected by changing something so difficult to change that only extraordinary effort and power can accomplish the feat. The mobilization of effort and power might be accomplished, if only in a way that the analyst might think unlikely or distasteful (e.g., violent revolution)." (Becker 1974, p.22)

Becker at the end of this article refers to the tricks employed by sociologists, particularly, in order to camouflage themselves behind the language of scientific objectivity. This in con-

nection to the last citation is what I understand to be the projection of the unchanging as unchangeable. I explain the lack of explanatory remarks accompanying the photographs that I include in this book as a conscious decision to allow multiple readings of the imagery I create of social phenomena. It is my way to communicate various narratives that enrich, while complicating, the main story of my research. For the most part the photos are supportive of the main narrative. I hope though that there are instances that the photos counterfeit my intentions and offer opportunities for other interpretations. I display my photographic documentation within the study without explicit reference to the adjoining texts, thus wanting to capitalise on what Hoggart et al. say:

> "[…] the meaning of a photograph changes with viewing context."
> (Hoggart et al. 2002, p.284)

As I don't have artistic aspirations with my photographs, for me they are data; if they have any aesthetic attributes these will have to lie in the eye of the beholder. Visual sociology is a field with increasingly defined research methods and specific ways to make photographs be relevant to, or even generate, social research. Considering some of these rules for practicing visual sociology,[15] it is appropriate to say that my visual documentation, although it bears some elements, it does not belong methodologically to visual sociology strictly speaking. I did not treat the results of my literature research in equal terms with the results of my photographic documentation, in the same way that I did not treat my interviews with the same analytical rigour as I did with the texts to which I refer in my research.

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[15] For guidelines see Urban Visual Sociology Lab of EUREX (European Online Seminar on Urban Transformation, Poverty, Spatial Segregation and Social Exclusion) http://shiva.uniurb.it/EUREX/visual_lab/visual_lab.htm

PUBLIC – PRIVATE: A DICHOTOMY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

 "The distinction between 'public' and 'private' has been a central and characteristic preoccupation of Western thought since classical antiquity, and has long served as a point of entry into many of the key issues of social and political analysis, of moral and political debate, and of the ordering of everyday life." (Weintraub 1997, p. 1)[16]

 "**Private** is still a complex word but its extraordinary historical revaluation is for the most part long completed. It came into English from fw privatus, L – withdrawn from public life, from rw privare, L – to bereave or deprive (English deprive has kept the strongest early sense). It was applied to withdrawn religious orders, where the action was voluntary (C14) and from C15 to persons not holding public or official position rank, as still in **private soldie**r and **private member** (in Parliament). It acquired the sense of secret and concealed both in politics and in the sexual sense of **private parts**. It acquired also (and this was one of the crucial moments of transition) a conventional opposition to public, as in **private house**, **private education**, **private theatre**, **private view**, **private hotel**, **private club**, **private property**. In virtually all these uses the primary sense was one of privilege; the limited access or participation was seen not as deprivation buts as advantage (cf. exclusive)."
(Williams 1988, p.242)

Jeff Weintraub (1997) discusses the dichotomy of public and private as *grand*. It is a dichotomy that encompasses our lives. Social norms have been constructed with respect to the distinction between public and private and social struggles are fought over their ambiguous boundaries. Raymont Williams (1988) presents the transitions in the significations of the term private through time in the English-speaking world.[17] He considers one of the most

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[16] Weintraub, J. (1997). The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction. In J. Weintraub & K. Kumar (eds.) *Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grant Dichotomy*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 1-42.

[17] See Williams, R. (1988). Keywords. *A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana Press.

noteworthy shifts in the use of the term private when it started to signify not deprivation, or exclusiveness and privilege, but simultaneously "independence and 'intimacy'" (Williams 1988, p. 242). Williams shows that *private* signifies often a distinction from State authorities and not only from public. I find interesting the relation Williams finds between *private* and bourgeoisie.

> "**Private**, that is, in its positive senses, is a record of the legitimation of a bourgeois view of life: the ultimate generalized privilege, however abstract in practice, of se-clusion and protection from others (*the public*); of lack of accountability to 'them'; and of related gains in closeness and comfort of these general kinds." (Williams 1988, p.243)

Interestingly, Williams proves the complexity of the term *private* while he offers no comprehensive description for *public*. This is in itself interesting as one may outline the significations of *public* as oppositions to those of *private*. Williams in fact describes private and public as carriers of contrasting meanings, and to my understanding, in a dichot-omous dualism. This dichotomous dualism permeates our cities, our perception of sociabil-ity, and solidifies in the built environment. Designers are among those whose professional identity is directly linked with the management of public and private, their boundaries, char-acteristics, transgressions, symbolism and function. To enquire into the dichotomy between public and private, when critically analysing urban public space, is paramount. David Brain (1997) analyses the fundamental implication of the public/private distinction in the discipline of design, and the built environment.

> "[…] the public/private distinction is a complex constitutive element in both the practices and outcomes of design. The ways that the public/private distinction is loaded with social significance and embodied in the built environment are thus shaped by the efforts of architects to respond to social and technological conditions affecting their discipline and their collective capacity to give visual expression to what come to be seen as salient qualities of different kinds of social space." (Brain 1997, p. 242)

In the final stages of my doctoral research on socio-spatial discrimination in urban public space, I asked myself an important question. The question concerned how literally, and to some extent stereotypically, authors in my bibliography used the terms *private* and *public*. Doubts emerged regarding the proofs laid out with persuasive eloquence by estab-lished authors, scholars and researchers concerning private, public and their opposition. The validity of the earlier question doesn't rely on its prompt timing – it did take me four years to ask this question – nor does it rely on its extraordinary revelation. The formulation of

this question somewhat in a late stage of my research manifests the assumptions and presumptions, as well as the unquestionable norms that not only influence our quest for reason in the world, but in addition predetermine how we search for this reason. The question was indeed implied to me quite early on in my work, by M. Kaartinen, a Finnish researcher.[18] Nevertheless, I needed a certain time to be able to articulate it myself in relevance to my research, my findings, and my understanding. If one considers all the reversals that are taking place in the sphere of the vernacular, and which often fuse public and private, then the question is: *what does the dichotomy between private and public mean?* Having sexual intercourse, defecating, urinating are some of the activities serving bodily necessities registered as intimate in other words to be performed in the sphere of the private and personal.[19] Meanwhile activities like the above do occur in public. The ban on such activities exists. In addition, the reversals take place, and we may ask who decides, and on what ground, what is public and what is private. Public space then, as all spaces, is a ground for a multifaceted power struggle.

These are very generic questions; however, my predisposition to inquire into a normalised dichotomy came with my realisation that all during my academic training as an architect and designer, but most of all for my entire upbringing to adulthood, the dichotomy between private and public remained basically unchallenged. Even the formulation of my research questions were fundamentally based on this dichotomous understanding. In general, I find dualisms to be disturbing; then this particular dualism between public and private, that by the way is often described in crystal clear opposition, emerged as problematic. My own cultural predisposition concerning what is and what should be public and/or private became disturbingly normalising. Instead in our societies, where ethnic, religious, sexual and other diversifications are more and more evident, there are similarly diverse perspectives about what is or should be public and private. The power struggle becomes more relevant in a diverse society that acknowledges itself as such.

The cultural clash inherent in living our public and private lives in today's diverse metropolises confronted me when I came across two articles. Ari Hynynen's (2004) *Places of Integration-Appropriation of Urban Space by Immigrants* refers to immigrants' appropria-

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[18] See Kaartinen, M. (2002). Public and Private: Challenges in the Study of Early Modern Women's Lives. In A. Korhonen & K. Tuohela (eds.) *Time Frames. Negotiating Cultural History*. Turku: University of Turku, pp. 89-104.

[19] In regard to eating in public, in the street: "In addition to articulating a nature/culture dichotomy, taboos about eating on the street also articulate a particular understanding of 'public' and 'private.' The street may be a site of consumption but only a particular disembodied from of consumption is civilised- tomato sauce dripping down the chin is not an appropriate public spectacle. Erasmus's concept of bodily propriety necessitated that the body should be controlled and hidden. All signs of bodily function should take place in 'private' space." (Valentine 1998, p.195)

and "Social understandings of human 'civility', class and gender in relation to food and eating have played an important part in producing the street as a civilised space. Social expectations about eating have determined that the street should be a space of self-restraint, culture and civility where the appetite is suppressed rather than a place where we are free instantly to gratify our so-called 'natural', 'animal' urges to eat; that it should be a 'public' place where intimacy, 'private' bodily matters, such as the act of eating, are not on display; and that it should be an ordered place where the mess of consumption is out of sight and out of mind, rather than a space which is polluted by the disorderly behaviour of 'public' grazers." (Valentine 1998, p.197)

tions of space in Finland, using as a case study the city of Joensuu. Armando Salvatore's (2004) *Making Public Space: Opportunities and limits of Collective Action Among Muslims in Europe*, has a more political tone, and concerns Muslims' making of public space in Europe. From that point on, the dichotomy between public and private, as well as the dichotomous way of thinking about these issues got an interesting turn. At last, all the bibliography about my two case studies involving Somali refugees in Helsinki and Albanian immigrants in Athens had a far greater impact on my perception of what Lefebvre calls the "production of space." Diasporic space is multifaceted, I am sure; however, it is more and more, for me, a space of action. It is not a compartmentalised physical or virtual entity that we researchers use, when we want to talk about the space where foreigners live in our cities. The latter approach distances the rest of us, from this space, when in fact it seems to me that *they* and *we*, the whole, share – often unwillingly – each others' diasporic space. It sounds banal to say that there is actually *only* diasporic space, where the main principle is manifold negotiation.

Negotiation might be what characterises today's social life as much as it characterises private and public as experiences. However, the term negotiation is additionally misleading because it presupposes distinct parts somehow in an adversarial relationship. This again might be reproductive of the dichotomy that we aim to question here in first place. Could it be that the boundaries between public and private are not blurred but simply don't exist, because our lives move beyond strict categories as we seemingly turn into *boundless* beings? Or could it be that the boundaries between public and private – since the terms are so deeply rooted in our understanding of the world – are constantly reshaping as we live, as we breathe? In what follows I will explore ideas of thinkers related to these and other questions. Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas will set the stage for the discussion as their writings seem to me so contemporary and relevant, despite the time-lapse of forty or fifty years since they were first published. For sure their language has been a difficult feature at times, as well as their *absence*. It is them who write, it is however *them*, who are nowhere to be *seen*. Different times, different genres of academic writing; many think, this is the proper way. However, it is maybe more probable that as we live and breathe we are working on different ways to do research and write about it. I imagine that public as well as private are *many*.

2.2 THE HUMAN CONDITION

Hannah Arendt (1998), in her book *The Human Condition* devoted a considerable portion to the public and private orders of human life. There, relying on Aristotle, Plato and the classics scholars of her day, she consolidated the first "sharp distinction" between the two orders of a man's existence, namely what is his own and what is common, at the rise of the city-state (Arendt 1998, p.24). Within the ancient Greek polis a dualism materialised that insisted that the private sphere of the household (*oikia* in Ancient Greek) was separate from the public

sphere of the political life. The first was the sphere of strict domination, wherein the basic human necessities, while remaining out of sight, were catered to under the rule of the master of the house. Having established *his* private sphere, a citizen could therefore enjoy the freedom of the public sphere, of politics and above all freedom amongst *his* equals.[20] Women and slaves were excluded from the public sphere, since they had to take care of the basic necessities of human livelihood, satisfying bodily functions and assuring the survival of the human species; the women in particular with labor, and the slaves with labour. In the polis, speech was an attribute that accentuated the body politic enacted in the public sphere.[21] As violence – a right of all men in order to survive still worthy only of barbaric ways of life – was restricted to the private sphere of the household and it was considered inappropriate for the public sphere. In public, persuasion by speech was proper. Women and slaves, of course, were not deprived of speech as such; however, their speech was not considered important being restricted from the public discussions and in the domain of labor (Arendt 1958, p.26-27).[22]

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20 "Greek *eleutheria* [freedom] is an extreme form of the competitive concept of freedom; and we shall see the difficulties experienced in attempting to subject the *eleutheros* [free citizen] to the rule of law, even the law-courts of democratic Athens. Furthermore, the unit of society which [...] commands the most powerful loyalties remains the individual household, with its *philoi* [friends]. To advance the success and eleutheria of one's own *oikos* [home] and philoi at the expense of the rest is an enterprise which will be vigorously opposed by other citizens who regard themselves as *agathoi* [worthy and good citizens]; but it cannot be effectively condemned in *arete* [virtues]-terms, for it is the maximising of such success and *eleutheria* that is the mark of *arete*. The tyrant has become most *agathos* and most *eleutheros*, for *eleutheria* is manifested in ruling over others and in not submitting to the rule of others oneself." (Adkins 1972, p.68)

21 For a different perspective on ancient Geek collective life, see Edward E. Cohen: "[...] modern scholarship has sought to understand Athenian civilization through a singular focus on the political organization of the adult male citizens. [...] Yet Athenian writers frequently describe territorial toponyms, those alleged 'spots on the map' – representing geographical unities rather than male kinship structures – as taking actions, making decisions, and exercising authority, and significant archaeological and literary data place the centre of ancient Greek communities not male political organizations but religious cults and institutions, in which women, resident 'foreigners' (metics), and slaves were often full participants and where women enjoyed a kind of 'cultic citizenship' [...]" (Cohen 2000, p. 6-7)

22 Richard Sennett (2002) traced the discrimination against women back to physiological albeit, gendered, differences in Greek antiquity; "[...] Greeks of Perikles' times thought about the interior of the human body. Body heat was the key to human physiology [...] hot bodies were strong, possessing the heat to act as well as react. When people listened, spoke, or read words, their body temperatures supposedly rose, and so again their desire to act- a belief about the body which underlay Perikles' belief in the unity of words and deeds. [...] The Greek understanding of the human body suggested different rights, and differences in urban spaces, for bodies containing different degrees of heat. These differences cut most notably across the dividing line of gender; since women were thought to be colder versions of men. Women did not show themselves naked in the city; more, they were usually confined to the interiors of houses, as though the lightless interior more suited their physiology than did the open spaces of the sun. [...] The treatment of slaves similarly turned on the belief that the harsh conditions of enslavement reduced the body temperature of the slave,[...] The unity of word and deed celebrated by Perikles was experienced only by male citizens whose 'nature' fitted them for it. The Greeks used the science of body heat, that is, to enact rules of domination and subordination." (Sennett 2002, p.34) About women's voice "The Parthenon is a hymn to a female deity [Athiná], a woman reigning over the city. Yet Perikles' drew his Funeral Oration to an end by declaring, 'Perhaps I should say a word or two on the duties of women to those among you who are now widowed. I can say all I have to say in a short word of advice.' The advice was to be silent. He declared that '[...] the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticizing you.' In returning to the city, women should again return to the shadows. No more were slaves and resident foreigners to speak in the city, since they too were all cold bodies." (Sennett 2002, p.68)

The public sphere, with its performative terrain of public space, was the sphere where a citizen was called to participate in the common affairs and to reveal *his* individual virtues. It was the sphere for representation par excellence.[23] Arendt believed that the desirability of the *polis* for the ancient Greeks was due to the relief it offered them from the burden of human mortality and the "futility of individual life" (Arendt 1998, p.56). The Greeks, and later the Romans, saw in the publicity of the public sphere the possibility to leave their traces on *history* through striving for excellence.[24]

A citizen of the *polis* had every right and reason to take part in the common affairs in public, as this gave him the opportunity to be excellent (*áristos*), and to appear to his peers as such.[25] What gave the citizens of the *polis* these rights? Arendt attributes this to the simple but fundamental issue of private ownership of a house; a location in the world that legitimised *his* participation in the affairs of this world (Arendt 1998, p.29-30). Speech and action, as well as speech as action, were central for registering one's right to publicness; as Arendt (1998 p.26) implied, speech wasn't an easy undertaking, for the citizen had to find "the right words at the right moment." This precise point is often an argument against the exclusivity of the public sphere as the sphere for agonistic representation of groups of stake holders with different performative capacities.[26]

Arendt of course did not stop in antiquity and the Greek *polis*, or the Roman *res publica*. Emerging from her account are concepts and notions that seem to be of striking relevance to modern life through multifaceted transformations.[27] Arendt referred to issues of modern life which are very tangible for us today, almost fifty years after her book was published.

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23 "To the ancient Athenian, displaying oneself affirmed one's dignity as a citizen. Athenian democracy placed great emphasis on its citizens exposing their thoughts to others, just as men exposed their bodies. These mutual acts of disclosure were meant to draw the knot between citizens ever tighter. [...] The insistence on showing, exposing, and revealing put its stamp on the stones of Athens. The greatest building work of Periklean era, the temple of the Parthenon, was sited on a promontory so that it stood out exposed to view from throughout the city below. The great central square of the city, the agora, contained few places which were forbidden territory as is modern private property. In the democratic political spaces the Athenians built, most notably the theatre built into the hill of Pnyx where the assembly of all citizens met, the organization of the crowd and the rules of voting sought to expose how individuals or small groups voted to the gaze of all. Nakedness might seem the sign of a people entirely at home in the city: the city was the place in which one could live happily exposed, unlike the barbarians who aimlessly wandered the earth without the protection of stone. Perikles celebrated an Athens in which harmony seemed to reign between flesh and stone." (Sennett 2002, p.33)

24 In Greek even nowadays the concept of *isterofimía* (literary translating as posthumous fame) modestly corresponds with the will of one to make sure that after his death he will be positively remembered.

25 In his analysis of the City in Greek and Roman Antiquity, Max Weber (1966, p.228-9) explains how the ancient Greek *agónes* "struggle for victory, gymnastic exercise, wrestling" and the Epics were the most important cohesive elements within the Hellenic world distinguishing them from all barbarians. In the *agónes* the participants were supposed to show themselves in a total and pure way, naked. Weber (1966, p.229) makes an interesting observation concerning that nakedness; "Never the prestige feelings suffered such a loss of distance and value as in these naked tournaments of the Greeks."

26 In an interview by Patricia C. Phillips the artist and designer Krzysztof Wodiczko said: "Artists need to understand, as most political and social activists and organizers do, that public space is often barricaded and monopolized by the voices of those who are born to speak and prepared to do so. First, this is done at the expense of those who cannot speak because they have no confidence that anyone will listen to them. [...] Second, they have no developed language. Third, they frequently are locked in post-traumatic silence." (Phillips 2003).

27 I will explore further on these transformations with the help of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* by Jürgen Habermas.

"The profound distinction between a private and a public sphere of life corresponds to the household and the political realms, which have existed as distinct, separate entities at least since the rise of the ancient city-state; but the emergence of the social realm, which is neither private nor public, strictly speaking, is a relatively new phenomenon whose origin coincided with the emergence of the modern age and which found its political form in the nation-state. […] In our understanding, the dividing line [between private and public realms] is entirely blurred, because we see the body of peoples and political communities in the image of the family whose everyday affairs have to be taken care of by a gigantic, nation-wide administration of house keeping." (Arendt 1998, p.28)

"Historically, it is very likely that the rise of the city-state and the public realm occurred at the expense of the private realm of family and household." (Arendt 1998, p.29)

Not only did the two spheres of public and private merge in the sphere of social in a compromise; the private, Arendt claims, suffered the cost of the expansion of the public. The idea of one sphere expanding and another shrinking was for a while very appealing to me. It seemed as a potential explanation of various contemporary arguments that want, for example in the case of North-American scholar Don Mitchell, the private sphere to expand at the cost of the public.[28] These seemingly contradictory views on the expansion of any one of the two spheres of private or public helped me understand the illusionary character of the

Athens, 2002. Open-air food market (in Greek *Agorá*).

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28 I refer elsewhere to Don Mitchell's (2003a), *The Right to the City.*

distinction between the two spheres and their competitiveness. It is not the distinction as such that is problematic but its nature and what it entails.

Aeschylus (458 B.C.E.) showed with *Oresteia* – his tragic trilogy on known Ancient Greek myth – that the public was necessitated, not to counteract the private, but in order to end civil strife in the polis by the means of persuasion and legal procedures.[29] Arendt explicitly argues that even in the *polis*, public and private spheres, although distinct, were interdependent, or, to be more precise, without the household with women and slaves catering to the urgencies of life, the public sphere couldn't exist. Furthermore:

> "[…]with the rise of the society, that is, the rise of the 'household' (oikia) or of economic activities to the public realm, housekeeping and all matters pertaining formerly to the private realm of the family have become 'collective' concern. In the modern world, the two realms indeed constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the family process itself. The disappearance of the gulf that the ancients had to cross daily to transcend the narrow realm of the household and 'rise' into the realm of politics is an essentially modern phenomenon." (Arendt 1998, p.33)

If the above is true, why do we keep referring to public and private, whether in regards to space, spheres, domains or realms? Why do we sustain the norms regarding what is to *be* public, shared, in common, and what to *remain* private?[30] It seems possible that individuals decide for themselves what to allow, and infiltrate their intimate or their social sphere; this, as I will argue with the help of Habermas, may be another illusion. To my understanding regarding the conditions of private and public, the in-between nature of modern life, the oscillations we experience between living in private and in public, oppose the dichotomy at hand itself. Arendt claims that one of the principle reasons why the boundaries between public and private spheres are becoming almost indistinguishable in modern times, with the rise of the social, is that prior economic activities serving human survival escaped the confines of home to become common affairs, or actually to be the new ground for excellence. The strict sense of the *privateness* of housekeeping dissolved as nation-states became all-inclusive gigantic institutions on the model of housekeeping itself.

As the private trait of privacy transformed radically through history, the publicness of public space likewise lost its exclusivity and came to house *excellence*. In the *polis*, being private meant being prohibited from entering the world of speech, of peers, of freedom from

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29 See Eumenides in Alan Shapiro and Peter Burian's (2003) translation from Greek of The Oresteia by Aeschylus (458 B.C.E.).
"[…] the Athens of Aeschylus' day, rapidly being democratised in institutions, was indeed upsetting the traditional moirai [destinies] of society and attempting to move in the direction of equality before law." (Adkins 1972, p.91)

30 It is remarkable how enduring an old Greek saying is nowadays: things concerning one's home, shouldn't be known to the public. This is considered part of common sense and wisdom.

the burden of necessities, of the ground for excellence.[31] With modernity, Arendt claims, privacy as such has been transformed, into a sphere of intimacy, distinct this time from the sphere of the social. Private, this way, seems to have lost its connection with the urgencies of life, as labour became more and more a function relating to the public sphere; however, the accelerated economic emancipation of family members in modernity provided the ground for individualism to develop and this, according to Arendt, led to an enrichment of the private (Arendt 1998, p.38-40). In this respect the familial structure of society is central in the development and advancement of norms about privacy and publicity.

The institution of the family apparently retreated as the individual's well being was more and more transferred to the responsibility of the welfare states, and their massive organisations, neither strictly public nor private.[32] While the social emerged comprising public and private spheres, many seemingly human conditions lost their ground. I refer here to norms, like the principle and form of the family, which had to and did transform, as Arendt and Habermas demonstrate. Then the welfare of nation-states developed the guise of equality, in order to pacify people enjoying radically different qualities of life. However, as Arendt put it:

> "[…] society equalizes under all circumstances, and the victory of equality in the modern world is only the political and legal recognition of the fact that society has conquered the public realm, and that distinction and difference have become private matters of the individual. […] The public realm, in other words, was reserved for individuality; it was the only place where men could show who they really and inexchangeably were." (Arendt 1998, p.41)

With modernity and all that contributed to its structure, spheres previously considered distinct fell into an extraordinary melting pot. Spheres expanded, shrank, merged, while attributes of the private sphere emerged in the public. On the other hand, speech, representation, appearance, and distinction were largely confined to a more inclusive and multifaceted private sphere. The private sphere, through the transformations brought on by individualism, became the enriched sphere of intimacy. The latter supposedly opposes the sphere of the social, which despite all, tends to absorb everything like a black hole. All the spheres combined in the sphere of the social, bring the "life process itself" into the public realm.[33] Thereafter,

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31 "Not only would we not agree with the Greeks that a life spent in the privacy of "one's own" (idion), outside the world of the common, is 'idiotic' by definition,[...]" (Arendt 1998, p.38)
Despite the plausibility of the above, nowadays the Greek understanding of leading a private life (idiotévo) has still negative connotations. Through an interesting combination between ancient Greek wisdom, and Christian Orthodox beliefs, it is considered common sense that the one who wants to lead a private life do so in order to hide and/ or escape social control and pressures. The word "idiot"

derives from the Latin "idiota" which means "ignorant person," and the Greek "idiotis" means a person leading a life outside the public eye. In the ancient Greek understanding, the latter would only be the deed of an insane, deviant, or stupid person; with the exception of women and slaves.

32 This retreat takes place at a different pace in different societies. In the North of Europe it seems that this societal change was accelerated, unlike in the South of Europe.

33 Arendt (1998, p.46-8).

two attributes of the public sphere, namely speech and action, have also been ostracised in the sphere of the intimate by ostracising excellence from the public realm as its natural habitat. This occurred by establishing labour as a ground for excellence that requires the presence of others. The social sphere with its equalising properties has led to the decline of the body politic, the sphere of participation in *public* affairs.

It maybe true, what the ancient Greeks realised, that for the *polis* to function properly it requires a small number of citizens.

> "The Greeks, whose city-state was the most individualistic and least conformable body politic known to us, were quite aware of the fact that the polis, with its emphasis on action and speech, could survive only if the number of citizens remained restricted. Large numbers of people, crowded together, develop an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule […]" (Arendt 1998, p.43)

In fact much of the modern scholarly and policy struggle is concerned with finding ways to re-politicize society and the public sphere.[34] My work and of course my personal interest spring from a deep desire to re-politicize public space.

Public means, for one thing, everything that can be seen and heard by everybody (Arendt 1998, p. 71). Public itself as a notion requires appearance in the presence of others, of strangers.[35] Appearance requires a setting. What does *appearance* accomplish? Excellence, however maybe not in the sense of the ancient Greeks; excellence of some sort, regarding contexts, group peers, and historical conditions at large. The latter provides a key concept: the idea of participating in the making of history, or histories if we accept the plurality of historical perspectives. Indeed, appearance is an affirmation of reality, and especially in our day and age of the virtual, the fleeting, the network, maybe it is urgent to provide the setting for people to be part of each others' realities, in *plural*. From the words of Arendt we realise that already fifty years ago it was evident that the intimate, with its sphere enriched by subjectivity, emotions and feelings, would grow in importance so much that, our disregard for the public sphere would eventually result in a lost sense of reality, of the world, and of the people around us (Arendt 1998, p.49-51). On the other hand, and Krzysztof Wodiczko would probably agree, appearing in the public requires one's certainty about the relevance and worthiness of what is to be shown and said. Otherwise, the matter is not of public importance and therefore it is downplayed, justifiably or not, as private.

This in its turn is a quite important point. There are things that are supposed to be public, worthy of appearance, publicity, debate and buzz, and there are things better to remain in the

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[34] See also Parekh (2000, p.341); Amin (2002, p.23).

[35] See Sandercock (2003, p.103-4).

closed sphere of the intimate, the private. Who decides, and on what conditions, what is wor-thy and relevant? In our pluralistic societies the subject herself takes the risk, and the fear of ridicule can be so limiting that in the lack of a supporting peer group the subject just resorts to silence, violence, or to a persistent struggle against the odds. Arendt's definition of public is twofold, each part, though, manifold, due to the complexity of the subject matter. Public is the man-made world around me, that which is not me or mine, the presence of which is accepted by all. It is furthermore the world that gathers us and simultaneously separates us (Arendt 1998, 52-3). The dilemma I see here is that, if public is the world-in-between, facili-tating the desirable separation between individuals, who therefore don't fall on each other and occupy a certain location in this world, what happens to the homeless people? The people whose place in the world is conditioned to be unsettled, or whose position in the world is not granted? People like refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, marginalised people in poverty, and so on.

Social Sustainability

The discussion concerning sustainability in life has left the domain of the technological and has entered the domain of the social. Many disciplines previously untouched by the mean-ing of sustainability start to develop concepts suitable for their own political correctness or sincere aim to think positively and proactively of the future. As we have seen Arendt spoke

Chania, Greece, 2003. Immigrants' meeting point.

of the public as the realm for people to appear and be part of the reality of others, to gain a sort of historical presence, not necessarily with the biggest ambition implied by such an attempt. The human will to be part of a continuum corresponds to the concept of sustainability; to be part of a continuum is to be part of history and of the future. In a world of mortals this can only mean to consider regarding our legacies. Sustainability implies permanence. This permanence refers not to fixity but to evolution; a process conditioning the possibilities for future mortals to be part of a sustainable continuum.[36]

Arendt points to social sustainability in her own way:

> "If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the life-span of mortal men. Without this transcendence into a potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm, is possible." (Arendt 1998, p.55)

I interpret the "potential earthly immortality" metaphorically as the willfulness to be part of a future long after our death; not fulfilling the Christian concept of guilt or vanity, but rather in contrast to it. As mentioned above, some disciplines, like architecture, have been working on the concept of sustainability ranging from energy efficient constructions all the way to permanence in change. The Spanish architect Ignasi de Solá-Morales, has called the latter *temporality*, and, with his notion of *weak architecture* has given architectural meaning to the *event* as an aesthetic experience.

> "Temporality does not present itself as a system but as an aleatory [random] instant that, responding above all to chance, is produced in an unforeseeable place and moment. In certain works of contemporary art, in dance, in music, in installation, the experience of the temporal as event, occurring once and then gone forever, ably explicates a notion of temporality that finds in the event its fullest form of expression." (Morales 1999, p.68)

As far as the possibility for change is concerned, Arendt put it plainly and simply:

> "[…] the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be decided. For though the common world is the common meeting ground for all, those who are present

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[36] Some of these ideas were analysed in Galanakis, M. (1998). *21st Century Agoras. Sustainable Spaces.* Master of Arts Thesis. The Design Academy Eindhoven, NL.

have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life, [...] The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective." (Arendt 1998, p.57-8)

Change, as well as the common world itself, originates from different perspectives present in an agonistic field; here, the point is not to eliminate the *weakest* stake holders, rather to allow the *weakest* to appear. Weak here I call the individuals, and marginalised groups, whose voice and public face have restricted but not impossible access to publicity.[37]

Changes

A realm is vital for the appearance of diversity in the presence of others. Such a realm, and its physical outlets, realise the potential of being present in society, being seen and heard, being visible as part of the world. According to Arendt, facing the voluntary or involuntary inaccessibility of this realm translates into loneliness. If I am not seen or heard by others I am alone, and my relatedness to the world around me is thinning. Left to my own subjectivity, I retreat. Arendt suggests that such a retreat is not even my shelter in my private sphere, as "the warmth of the hearth and the limited reality of family life" are lost due to modernity's vast socialisation and individualism (Arendt 1998, p.58-9).

It is very interesting and enlightening, that we finally reach a point where Arendt's argumentation comes down to the *disappearance* of the public realm and the *liquidation* of the private. She goes on to relate the public-private distinction to the elementary question of property.[38] Arendt (1998 p.63) turns to the ancient Greeks and shows that as long as the private was confined to the walled area of a household, the realm outside those walls was the designated public realm. Walls distinguished the physical existence of private and public; walls delineated sacred private property from public realm, the boundaries were literally the law.[39] This correlates with Don Mitchell's (2003a, p. 166-7) argument that denying the homeless their presence in public, while they have no home to attend to their needs, equals their extinc-

[37] This can be related to Nancy Fraser's (1992) *subaltern counter-publics*, a concept discussed elsewhere.

[38] The analysis by Don Mitchell (2005b) according to which the issue of public space can be boiled down to a matter of property, is relevant here. See Mitchell, D. (2005b). The S.U.V. Model of Citizenship, Floating Bubbles, Buffer Zones, and the Rise of the 'Purely Atomic' Individual. *Political Geography.* Vol. 24, pp. 77-100.

[39] Law in modern as in ancient Greek is "nómos," from the ancient Greek verb "némo" meaning distribute, divide.

Helsinki, 2003. Reclaim the Street event at the city centre.

tion from the face of the earth, since they have no place in it. Homelessness demonstrates that the distinction between private and public has settled into the distinction between the propertied and the propertyless.

"The typical medieval needy person was the poor artisan, the craftsman without work; the typical needy person, the proletarian, of antiquity was the person politically declassed because he no longer possessed property." Max Weber (1966 [1958], p.199)[40]

Propertyless people had and have fewer rights to citizenship; they have no material assets to offer as evidence for a quantifiable existence in a consumer society. The propertied have the right to publicity. Herein lies a paradoxical anachronism; the *polis* is once more relevant, if only partly. Modernity has altered the conditions through which we talk about and experience the social, the private, the public, the family, the individual and the world as such;

Stockholm, 2004. Saluhallen Östermalm. Food Market.

despite this, a person still seems to have the right to partake in the public as long as *he* has a privately owned location in the world. I have been using the *male* article to highlight the fact that despite all the talk about gender equality in modern societies, especially the western ones – as Arendt wrote society equalizes – the vernacular shows that such equality is, in the worst scenario, a masking. This is important in our discussion because private and public, more than realms, spaces, domains or spheres, are conditions for human interaction.

These conditions altered and alter as we speak, merge, liquidify, disintegrate, and still re-emerge. The difference might be that the battle between the individual and the social is one of distinctions, despite the interdependence between the two. Although returning to the ideals of *polis* seems unrealistic, attributes of private and public have never been totally lost. The unresolved nature of the human interac-

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40 Weber, M. (1966). *The City*. London, New York: The Free Press.

tions and relationships constituting public life may explain the recurrence of these ancient concepts. The market is not a public realm, as people gather there desiring products not other people, and their relatedness translates into transactions not speech and action. Arendt refers to the self-alienation of commercial society:

> "[…] which indeed excludes men qua men and demands, in striking reversal of the ancient relationship between private and public, that men show themselves only in the privacy of their families or the intimacy of their friends." (Arendt 1998, p.210)

It is hardly difficult to see why there has been, in the last years, all this discourse on the disneyfication, commercialisation and privatisation of public space; the social, if Arendt is right, has brought both public and private into a joint collapse. Fortunately, there are voices challenging society and social norms.

The Question of Participation and Citizenship

> "It certainly is not without irony that those whom [artists and scientists] public opinion has persistently held to be the least practical and the least political members of society should have turned out to be the only ones left who still know how to act and to act in concert." (Arendt 1998, p.324)

> "One of the tasks of planners and urban intellectuals is to deconstruct these discourses, and to provide counter-discourses. Official urban discourses (those produced by City Councils, Department of Planning, Police Departments, mainstream media) tend to legitimize and privilege the fears of the bourgeoisie, their fears of those Others who might invade or disrupt their homely spaces, their habitus. We rarely hear from those folks whom official discourse classifies as Other, about their fears: the fear, for example, of being hungry, homeless, jobless, of having no future in the city, of being unable to provide for one's children, the fear of not being accepted in a strange environment, the fear of police or citizen violence against them." (Sandercock 2003, p.124)

Arendt thought of artists and scientists as the best candidates to be political members of society, while Sandercock expects urban intellectuals to deconstruct normative discourse. I am in favour of a more inclusive concept of a political challenge, especially in respect to the everyday life practices of visibility and appearance. We are all best candidates to be political members of society, organise in groups and act in concert. The issue here then is what constitutes political membership in society? The members of an insurgent group may consider themselves to be political activists, while other groups may, for instance, think of them as terrorists.

Helsinki, 2004. Anti-war protest.

Helsinki, 2004. Anti-war protest, Railway Station Square.

"[…] the *regulation* (urban economic policy) of the exchange and production conditions in the city represent the counterpart to the *organization* (traditional and feudal-contractual) of activities united in the economy of the *oikos*." (Weber 1966, p.74)

There has been a great deal of argumentation dedicated to privatisation, and the expansion of the private sphere at the cost of the public. Meanwhile, Arendt suggests that historically the opposite occurred. It may be that establishing a functioning public sphere, realm, domain, or space, requires recognition of its continuity with the so-called private or intimate. Furthermore, a well functioning public requires a well functioning private sphere. An ongoing discourse of the relations between the various scales of living spaces, from the home to the micro-public, to the city, is crucial for understanding ourselves and the world around us.

Max Weber (1966) [1958] presents his evolutionary model of the city. With his analysis of occidental and oriental cities, in ancient and medieval times shows that historically certain attributes had to be met for a true 'city': a conglomeration of houses close to each other, a castle or fortress where the ruler/city's protector and his court resided, a market of local and foreign products, and an 'urban community association' spatially facilitated.

"Neither the 'city,' in the economic sense, not the garrison, the inhabitants of which are accounted with special political-administrative structures, necessarily constitute a 'community.' An urban 'community,' in the full meaning of the word, appears as a general phenomenon only in the Occident." (Weber 1966, p.80)

Weber describes a kind of urban formation that is met in the west and far less elsewhere; his views rely on a reading of history that renders the West more 'urbanised' than the East. His argument for the difference between the occidental urban communities and the oriental city formations is the presence in the west of the concept of citizenship:

"[…] as a specific status quality of the urbanite […]" (Weber 1966, p.83)

Weber addresses citizenship as the rights and even obligation of the city inhabitants to autonomy and participation in local and self-administration. He describes this participation as necessary for the polis. Weber's concepts of the city and citizenship lead me to think of our modern-day urban conditions as historic products of his occidental cities. Thus, the urban conditions of density exist, the State is the *Castle*, the market is evident; however, the community association as citizenry seems to have thinned. The State on the other hand has been professionalised to a degree that it has defused in the civic society and the market itself. Protectionism from the State is no longer desired, in the context of free economies and global

markets. In this setting, citizenship shrinks largely down to voting rights. Participation in the running of the multi-ethnic city is not banned but remains poorly facilitated.

The role of public spaces in this context is crucial, as they represent the real and symbolic places for experiencing togetherness among strangers; a community association of some sort among urbanites with different interests living 'close to' each other. When I discuss the continuum of public and private, I suggest that public spaces are full of meaning, and important. A library, a station, a square, or a park, are common living spaces planned to provide the grounds to enact our rights to public expression. I advocate the proliferation of such spaces for multiple publics where community doesn't imply any imposed cohesion based on locality, religion, ethnicity or skin colour, but a willingness to negotiate interests overlapping on common spaces, on our streets, neighbourhoods and the wider city.

> "There are clear limits then to how far 'community cohesion' can become the basis of living with difference. Amin [2002] suggests a different vocabulary of local accommodation to difference-'a vocabulary of rights of presence bridging difference, getting along' [Amin 2002, p17]. To adopt the language of Henri Lefebvre, this could be expressed as the right to difference, and the right to the city. The achievement of these rights depends on a politics of active local citizenship, an agonistic politics (as sketched by Donald) of broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings, and an always emerging, negotiated common culture." (Sandercock 2003, p.96)

Helsinki, 2003. Itäkeskus shopping mall.

2.3 THE BOURGEOIS PUBLIC SPHERE

Arendt found in the Greek *polis* the archetypal public realm and its virtues she used as a spring-board for an account of public and private spheres in human life. These conditions of human life have changed, and Arendt has critically explained how the change is, according to her, a story of the mutual collapse of the two orders. Arendt's *Human Condition* influenced Jürgen Habermas in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, published in 1962. Arendt suggested that the public sphere par excellence, despite its shortcomings, was the one of the polis; private and public, seemingly opposing spheres, coexisted and were actually dependent on each other. Transformations occurred, meanwhile, that showed these two distinct conditions of human life to be disappearing, loosing their meaning, their substance for our contemporary world. Habermas gives us another perspective.[41] Greeks and Romans are his background, while for his critical discourse on the structural transformations of the public sphere he uses the bourgeois public sphere as an archetype.

In the *bourgeoisie* and in the conditions that gave rise to it, as well as in the conditions the bourgeoisie itself created, Habermas shows an occurrence of qualities of the archetypal public realm that, for centuries since the *polis* and the *res publica*, had been submerged. From the first few pages Habermas points to the ambiguity of the terms "public" and "public sphere." These had specific meanings at different times in the past, yet, when applied in the era of the social welfare state, they make little sense. We call situations "public," and imply their unrestricted accessibility, even when, as in the case of certain public buildings accessibility is limited.[42] Expressions like "public reputation," "public opinion" when opposing the authorities, "public organs" such as the media, have a normative power and remain in use although ambivalent, circumstantial and if I may add often contradictory (Habermas 2003, p.1-2).

Habermas, like Arendt, traces down the categories, as he calls them, of public and private back to the Greek *polis*. The public sphere of the body politic was comprised of discussion and action. And as Arendt had pointed out, the qualities of the polis were transcending the physicality of the city-state; they were based on the gathering of people to discuss and act together. *Polis* has been used and abused as a notion, system, physical entity, and it will continue to be.[43]

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[41] I had been negatively predisposed towards Habermas; I am now less so. See the contributions in Calhoun's (1992) edited book *Habermas and the Public Sphere*.

[42] We seem to internalise this contradiction, so that we rarely question it. Unlike AB; AB, my Finnish interviewee with a "mental handicap" as he described himself, was very upset because he was denied access to the Finnish parliament house. He said that the reason was his "handicap." Discussion No25, 18.6.2004.

[43] Edward E. Cohen (2000), opening his book *The Athenian Nation* briefly presents the vagueness of the term *polis*. "Modern conceptualization of the ancient Greek political community, or polis, is based on the model of Athens, the only of the hundreds of ancient Greek *poleis* for which detailed information on political and social institutions survives. Yet, as the Greeks recognized, and as many modern authors have emphasized, Athens differed fundamentally from the other *poleis*: among a multitude of incongruities,

> "Since the Renaissance this model of the Hellenic public sphere, as handed down to us in the stylized form of Greek self-interpretation, has shared with everything else considered 'classical' a peculiarly normative power" (Habermas 2003, p. 4)

Having said this, Habermas challenges the normative power of the Hellenic public sphere. He argues that in Greek and Roman antiquity, despite their related but also varied perspectives towards what was public and what was private, there was in both cases a strict distinction between the two. That distinction defined through the Roman law, survived during the Middle Ages without the terms having any constant meaning either in the ancient, or in our modern distinction. Despite this, the feudal lord of the High Middle Ages did enjoy a *publicness of representation* related to the strict codes of emblems, dress, manners and rhetoric. On the other hand, the private was related to particular or special interests. What was common, were locations anyone could get access to, like a fountain or the market square; these were the *"loci communes, loci publici"* (Habermas 2003, p. 6).

When the aristocracy emancipated itself from the feudal lord, it started to develop as the sphere of what in the 18th century was called, "good society," with its protocols and codes of behaviour, more individuated and more independent of the monarch's court. Historically this development took place after the formation of the national and territorial states – especially when capitalist economic tensions separated the wealth of the state from the property of the monarch – and eventuated in the separation of the two spheres of public and private.[44] After the middle of the 16th century, according to Habermas, we can find a German word corresponding to the French *privé* and the English private. To be "private" was to be excluded from the realm of state authority, which then constituted the realm of "public." The notion of "public" referred to the state and its growing bureaucracy, the "public authorities," everything outside that realm was "private." It was from that period that the "public authorities" were correlated to people's welfare, while people themselves were serving their private interests (Habermas 2003, p. 6-12).

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it was too large, too impersonal, too lacking in self-sufficiency to constitute a traditional Hellenic political unit; by Aristotle's criteria, it was not a *polis* at all. Herodotos, 'the Father of Ethnography no less than the Father of History,' even terms Athens an *ethnos* (a 'nation or 'people'), a word normally used in antithesis to polis. Indeed, ancient Athens manifest to a high degree the characteristics now utilized by modern ethnologists to identify a nation: the sharing, by the members of a culturally homogeneous social group, of a mutually conceptualized identity; a scale of organization and existence that precludes personal contact among the majority of the members of this group, resulting in the creation of an 'imagined community,' imagined 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them'; the creation and perpetuation of 'myths' set in historical fabrications that establish or reinforce this group's claims to cohesiveness, uniqueness, self-determination, and/or aggrandizement; focus on a specific physical territory over which the group desires some form of autonomy; and territorial mobility for members functioning through a common economy." (Cohen 2000, p. 3-4)

"For the Greeks, any grouping of people larger than a village (kōme) might be either a *polis* or an *ethnos*: there was no other alternative. This limited choice resulted from theGreek tendency to understand and to organize phenomena not through a definitional focus on a specific subject in isolation, but through contrast, preferably through antithesis." (Cohen 2000, p.22-23)

44 Habermas (2003) in his subchapter *On the Genesis of the Bourgeois Public Sphere*, explains in detail how early finance and trade capitalism developed the ground for a new social order to take shape already from the 13th century.

Habermas first argues that the bourgeoisie that developed through multifaceted and interdependent economic, political and social processes, for the first time since antiquity demonstrated a reasonable separation between the public and private spheres. The separation is presented as *reasonable* not only because it was reasonably anticipated, but also because the bourgeois public sphere was based on *reason* as such, cultivated by *reading*. One of the fundamental elements that Habermas (2003, p.15) saw as transformative, in Europe already in the 13th century, was *"the traffic in commodities and news."*

The conditions developed for civil society to build up against a growing bureaucratic and impersonal state, firstly because of the progressive deterioration of the publicness of the feudal authorities, which allowed space for the sphere of public authority to emerge, and secondly because of the shift of economic interests from trade to manufacturing that brought production from the household into the spotlight of the public sphere and general interest. Habermas (2003, p.19) seems to agree with Arendt that the sphere of the "social" consisted of the private sphere of society that became of general interest in their words "publicly relevant."[45]

Beijing 2005.

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45 For references on the "social" in Arendt's (1998) *Human Condition*, see for example the pages 28, 38, 47, 49, and 69.

Reason

In the midst of this socio-economic climate, the channelling of news and information grew in importance from a matter of limited interest, and as such private for the merchants and guilds of the Middle Ages, to become more and more public with the appearance of the first daily political journals in the mid 17th century Europe. The state authorities took the press under their supervision and to their advantage. It was as if they had soon realized that the control of news and information offered to the public was vital. Here Habermas takes an important step for his argumentation: by presenting the importance of the traffic of news, and therefore acknowledging the transformative powers of the press, it cannot but bring into the foreground his *reading public*. Habermas' *bourgeoisie* was precisely that reading public.[46]

The historic report woven by Habermas brings us to the forefront of bourgeois society, and to the revolutionary conditions created by taxation and the state's increasing intervention in the private sphere of the household. Society, or raher its literate elite, faced with sweeping changes, had to be industrious, and by making use of its reason to establish a critical sphere in order to facilitate the brewing of a common sense. It was a reaction to the increasing patronage of the state that society reclaimed a part of its private control by insisting on the separation between the private realm of the household the public realm of state authority. On the other hand, the conditions demanded that the processes of reproduction, once an idiom of the privacy of the household, become a matter of public interest. The fusion of the public and private sphere created a demand for a kind of separation from the part of the society who had already consolidated its oppositional role to the state. The mean used by the state to patronize the society and as, Habermas (2003, p.24) writes, "turn society into a public affair in a specific sense," was the press. The press itself, though, was transformed as its growth meant that the state authorities had to become less repressive due to the impossibility of total control. The people, who were writing in the press both before and after the 18th century, possessed a strong agency regardless if they had to stay restrained at the behest of a ruler, or under the censorship of sensible information. People always wanted to go a step further, and this agency Habermas demonstrated, even though partially, as he insisted on the agency of the bourgeoisie and the reading world, as well as of the critical public.[47] Habermas' bourgeois public sphere materialised through gatherings of people belonging to specific social stratum. The members of those gatherings functioned as private people and/or as owners of commodities. This sphere is a quasi-public, quasi-private realm, located primarily in the controlled

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46 "[…] a new stratum of 'bourgeois' people arose which occupied a central position within the 'public.' The officials of the rulers' administration were its core […] Added to them were doctors, pastors, officers, professors, and 'scholars,' who were at the top of a hierarchy reaching down through schoolteachers and scribes to the 'people.' [in the 1700s] For in the meantime the genuine 'burghers,' the old occupational orders of craftsmen and shopkeepers, suffered downward social mobility; they lost their importance along with the very towns upon whose citizens' rights their status was based. At the same time, the great merchants outgrew the confining framework of the towns and in the form of companies linked themselves directly with the state. Thus, the 'capitalists,' the merchants, bankers, entre-

publicness of domesticity. The famous salons were the physical locations of a public sphere realised through the gatherings of people to exchange views, and either as private people critically

> "[…] debate in the world of letters about experiences of their subjectivities"
> (Habermas 2003, p.55)

or as owners of commodities rationally and critically

> "[…] debate in the political realm, concerning the regulation of their private sphere"
> (Habermas 2003, p.55)

Family and the Tension between Public and Private

We see therefore that the bourgeois public sphere, according to Habermas, constituted a sphere of a controlled publicness, where the conjugal family expanded its intimate sphere and represented itself to peers, in a way that seems to bear similarities to the agonism of the public sphere of the *polis*. Enlightened, rational and critical debate remained largely a privilege of men, while women as "dependents" – as Habermas calls the family members of a conjugal family who relied for their livelihood on the male head of the family – were, strictly speaking, basically excluded from the political realm, though less from the romantic world of literature. The latter required maybe more criticism and less reason, and could facilitate more the expression of subjectivity.[48] The contribution of feminist studies concerns the conditions of what Habermas referred to as the intertwined bourgeois intimate (the sphere of the family) and public sphere, and its legacy all through modernity till our days.[49] In addition, the state-run political realm was the one proper for debate concerning matters of the private sphere,

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preneurs, and manufacturers [...] belonged to that group of the 'bourgeois' who, like the new category of scholars, were not really 'burghers' who, like the new category of scholars, were not really 'burghers' in the traditional sense. This stratum of 'bourgeois' was the real carrier of the public, which from the outset was a reading public.

In this stratum, which more than any other was affected and called upon by mercantilist policies, the state authorities evoked a resonance leading the publicum, the abstract counterpart of public authority, into an awareness of itself as the latter's opponent, that is, as the public of the now emerging public sphere of civil society. For the latter developed to the extent to which the public concern regarding the private sphere of civil society was no longer confined to the authorities but was considered by the subjects as one that was properly theirs." (Habermas 2003, p.23)

47 For an account on the emergence of critical public as well as publicity and public judgment, see pages 25-6 in Habermas' (2003) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.*

48 Habermas' choice of words is indicative of this; "critical debate in the world of letters" and "rational-critical debate in the political realm."

49 "Feminist analyses have shown how many welfare provisions have been established within a two-tier system. First, there are the benefits available to individuals as 'public' persons by virtue of their participation, and accidents of fortune, in the capitalist market. Benefits in this tier of the system are usually claimed by men. Second, benefits are available to the 'dependents' of individuals in the first category, or to 'private' persons, usually women." (Pateman 2000, p.243)

of regulations affecting affairs between private people, between them and the state, and the livelihood of the conjugal family and the household.

> "The fully developed bourgeois public sphere was based on the fictitious identity of the two roles assumed by the privatized individuals who came together to form a public: the role of the property owners and the role of human beings pure and simple." (Habermas 2003, p.56)

The distinction between being an owner and a human being reveals the essential prerequisite or the excluding condition for belonging or not belonging to the public sphere: *property*.[50] For the bourgeoisie, as well as for the citizen of the *polis*, the proper ownership of a location in this world seems to have been a precondition for participating in the public sphere. The *polis* had a normative effect on life as a member of a city and as a lord of a household. Habermas pointed to this view. With the bourgeois public sphere, we see how an additional normative model emerged that still sustains certain norms from the era of the *polis* or *res publica*. It is striking that the 18th century bourgeois public sphere should have left such a strong legacy to our days; despite, as we will see, numerous radical social transformations. This doesn't mean, though, that this persistence is unfounded; on the contrary, many of the arguments that Habermas provides explain very well the public-private ambiguity as well as the persistence in rationalising this dichotomy. According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere evolved due to or through the tension between the state authority and society. The first was essentially public and the second essentially private. Even the bourgeois public sphere was a part of the private realm. The end of the bourgeois public sphere came with the advancement of the market economy which brought about the sphere of the "social." The latter constituted the field of fusion between state and society, while Habermas considered the separation between the two to be the basis of the bourgeois public sphere.

> "The downfall of the public sphere, demonstrated by its changing political functions […], had its source in the structural transformation of the relationship between the public sphere and the private realm in general […]." (Habermas 2003, p.142-3)

> "The more society became transparent as a mere nexus of coercive constraints, the more urgent became the need for a strong state." (Habermas 2003, p.144)

We see that the addition of states' progressive interventionism on people's livelihoods gave shape to the welfare state, which from the end of 19th and through the 20th century insti-

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[50] The urban scholar Don Mitchell (2003a, 2005a) considers that the right to urban public space has been defined and treated as a matter of property ownership.

tutionalized the *social*. The *social*, as Arendt suggested earlier, fused the boundaries between public and private while the two terms continued to be meaningful fixed in an opposition.

> "To the degree that state and society permeated each other, the institution of the conjugal family became dissociated from its connection with processes of social reproduction. The intimate sphere, once the very center of the private sphere, moved to its periphery to the extent that the private sphere itself became deprivatized. The bourgeoisie of the liberal era spent their private lives prototypically in occupation and family; the realm of commodity exchange and of social labor belonged to the private sphere as much as the "household" relieved of any directly economic functions." (Habermas 2003, p.151-2)

The transformation of family ties based on dependence and patriarchal dominance, effected by the market economy and the welfare state, and of occupation deprivatised and eventually depersonalized in modernity, were two of the developments that accelerated the socio-structural transformation of the public sphere.

Furtheremore Valentine (1998) demonstrates how the deprivatisation of eading has altered urban culture and the street-scape.

> "[…] attitudes to eating in the street -particularly by the young- may be changing and that this in turn may be leading to a re-definition of the nature of 'public culture' and hence the place of the street." (Valentine 1998, p.198)[51]

We see a process of redefining the public and the private as societal conditions that change. In this process, as may have been evident, ambivalence and arbitrariness is inherent; even when we try to unravel complex procedures of social change and development, as Habermas did, clarity can be deceiving.

Deterioration or Shift?

Habermas uses the example of physical space to show us the deterioration of the quality of public and of private life in the city.

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[51] In relation to the re-appropriation of the street by people's eating habits, Goffman (1972, p.47) has talked about bodily odours as one of the modalities of violation of territoriality. One could argue the same about food odours. For example eating a hot dog in public releases odours that may be violating the territoriality of other individuals, and undermine publicness by foregrounding intimacy.

"Thin walls guaranteed, if need be, a freedom of movement protected from sight but not from hearing; they too assumed functions of social communications difficult to distinguish from social control. Privacy was not given the medium of home life, but rather one that had first to be brought about: […]. In proportion as private life became public, the public sphere itself assumed forms of private closeness […]." (Habermas 2003, p. 157-8)

And,

"The reciprocity of the public and the private spheres is disturbed. It is not disturbed because the city dweller is mass man per se and hence no longer has any sensibility for the cultivation of the private sphere; but because he no longer succeeds in getting an overview of the ever more complicated life of the city as a whole in such a fashion that is really public for him." (Bahrdt 1958 cited in Habermas 2003, p.159)

These two quotations bring urban space into the discussion, on the large scale of the city as well as on the smaller scale of the home. According to Bahrdt and Habermas, public and private experienced a displacement: private life became public and the public sphere engendered introversion. Living with thins walls, limits our privacy, while with the television, for example, our private sphere is invaded by the pseudo-public sphere of media.[52] However, what does it mean for us today to be living in a thin-walled apartment? How has this perverted our sense of privacy, and how public do we feel in our homes? No answer is simple. Different circumstances create different conditions for individuals to experience privateness or publicness. And although our individual agency has undeniably expanded to all levels of life, there are still limitations, as nothing is given.

One evening in the early nineties, as a student living in a tiny thin-walled apartment in Greece, I heard the violent outburst of my neighbour against his partner. The cries got louder, but worst of all the sound of beating penetrated the walls of an elevator shaft and the staircase and reached the interior of my apartment. I didn't have much choice; I called the police and the response I got was that they couldn't do anything unless the victim of the attack called and asked for their help. The Greek police, according to their regulations then, had to respect the privacy of my neighbour it seems more than my 'public' (as I stated my name) report, but more importantly, more than the safety of a person.[53] The processes that Habermas, with the help of Bahrdt, described are indeed multifaceted, and each process creates a field of action that can prove quite unpredictable. My story stands as an example of rapture between a supposed increased publicness of private life and the modus operandi of deeply rooted norms. In

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[52] For more see Habermas (2003, p. 170-2).

[53] On gender issues in public and private space see also Nancy Duncan (1996) and Carole Pateman (2000).

other words, while I thought that the fight next door was of public concern, the police thought that it was a private matter between my neighbour and his partner.

> "The shrinking of the private sphere into the inner areas of a conjugal family largely relieved of function and weakened in authority-the quite bliss of homeyness- provided only the illusion of a perfectly private personal sphere; for to the extent that private people withdrew from their socially controlled roles as property owners into the purely "personal" ones of their noncommittal use of leisure time, they came directly under the influence of semipublic [media] authorities, without the protection of an institutionally protected domestic domain. Leisure behaviour supplies the key to the floodlit privacy of the new sphere, to the externalization of what is declared to be the inner life. What today, as the domain of leisure, is set off from an occupational sphere that has become autonomous, has the tendency to take the place of that kind of public sphere in the world of letters that at one time was the point of reference for a subjectivity shaped in the bourgeois family's intimate sphere." (Helmuth Plessner 1960, p.50 cited in Habermas 2003, p.159)

Leisure and consumption have nowadays displaced what used to be the bourgeois public sphere in the world of letters. The field of leisure, exaggerated by consumption and facilitated in the intimate sphere as well as the private sphere of the social, has consequently turned into social reproduction. As I understand it, the individual subjectivity, the innermost of an individual as a private person, is shaped by social forces of an increasingly public or semi-public character. This realisation seems to be in accordance with Arendt's argument that what we experience nowadays is not the deterioration of the public but of the private sphere. As Habermas wrote:

> "The bourgeois ideal type assumed that out of the audience-oriented subjectivity's well-founded interior domain a public sphere would evolve in the world of letters. Today, instead of this, the latter has turned into a conduit for social forces channelled into the conjugal family's inner space by way of a public sphere that the mass media have transmogrified into a sphere of culture consumption. The deprivatized province of interiority was hollowed out by mass media; a pseudo-public sphere of a no longer literary public was patched together to create a sort of superfamilial zone of familiarity." (Habermas 2003, p.161-2)

Habermas claims that the common denominator of all the social tendencies in the 20th century that replaced "the bourgeois forms of sociability" was "abstinence from literary and political debate." In this way he largely disregards a great deal of human literary and political agency.

Debate and Human Agency

> "In this intermediate sphere[of the re-politicized social sphere] the sectors of society that had been absorbed by the state and the sectors of the state that had been taken over by society intermeshed without involving any rational-critical political debate on the part of private people." (Habermas 2003, p.176)

Habermas persistently refers to debate as a missing element in our modern societies. It is possible though, that Habermas here makes an assumption partly disregarding human agency, community politics, and social forces. It is not easy to grasp the reasons why the *rational-critical debate* of the bourgeois *readers* was superior to the way people have in the past or are nowadays trying to revolt or oppose top-down decisions, debating, marching, or picketing. It is possible, of course, that Habermas was presenting a very specific kind of debate, one more likely to have appeared in literary *salons* than in the burning banlieues of Paris 2005. I dare to say that it is equally possible that the tendency of society to promote the first may have resulted in the outburst of the latter. As we will see further on, in regard to the contribution of Nancy Fraser, the Habermasian concept of *private people* gathering to form a public separated from the state narrows down the potential for human agency, weakening the concept as such of a public sphere. A public sphere persistently independent from the state has less pressure power on the level of decision making.[54]

Elizabeth Wilson has showed that there were numerous occasions, especially in urban centres, where *bohemia* didn't simply signify a certain lifestyle of social misfits, but also what Habermas addresses as a unique privilege of the bourgeoisie, namely literary and political debate of societal norms. There were instances when debate actually involved women and other excluded groups, in a word, the 'Other' of bourgeois society.[55] If, for Habermas, debate is an idiom of the public sphere, and its ideal form realised already in the physicality of the bourgeois *salon*, then it is easy for us to understand his consequent argumentation concerning the demise of public debate. He scolded the commodification of discussions that are manipulated so that they patronise and "educate" or *inform* people (Habermas 2003. p.164). His perspective is quite relevant for us today, not only because of the abundance of staged discussions on the media circuits, but also because there is this discussion genre that claims to be reigning in the realm of reason and critical debate. I am referring to a certain academic or scholarly discourse which, often inhibited or rationally self-contained, reflects snobbery

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[54] For more on the separation between the bourgeois public sphere and the state see Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press.

[55] See Wilson, E. (2003). *Bohemians. The Glamorous Outcasts*. London, New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks.

towards publicness or politics. Instead, a normative representational function is more and more promoted, as happens in the media too, to be the aim of debates that are more based on *reasonable* consensus than on an agreement for opposition to manifest itself. Therefore, we have turned debate, the public quality par excellence, into a debatable and altogether questionable commodity, ideally found in past times, however principally never free, unconstrained or inclusive.

Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003) in much of her scholarly work has advocated that experts learn to listen to the voices of difference. Similarly Forester (2000) argues in favour of experts becoming better listeners and story tellers. I strongly believe that listening and story-telling in the public sphere, are fundamental conditions for the facilitation of debate. Habermas emphasises the essentiality of reason for debate; I have to disagree. The liberation from reason may bring us one step closer to public debate and functioning public spaces, *if* this is desired. The last hypothetical *if* concerns a general discussion about democracy in today's world and how it is being practiced.

Williams (1988, p.95) shows that democracy is not as clearly given a principle as we often think. Democracy, from its appearance in ancient Greece to the present, has been used to represent a multitude of ideas and principles of governing politics, often in stark contradiction

Helsinki, 2004. Anti-war demonstration.

with each other. One thing is clear from his description of the term: that it has been mainly a conception of the West, and that its current predominant signification is a product of developments in the West. Thus, democracy's largely illusive singularity may be explained by the intellectual colonialism of the West. Williams presents the view that what we call democracy today is not what the ancient Greeks called democracy, nor should it be, I think; it is rather a North American evolutionary interpretation of state and public power.

> "No questions are more difficult that those of democracy, in any of its central senses. Analysis of variation will not resolve them, though it may sometimes clarify them. To the positive opposed senses of the socialist and liberal traditions we have to add, in a century which unlike any other finds nearly all political movements claiming to stand for **democracy** or **real democracy**, innumerable conscious distortions: reduction of the concepts of *election*, *representation* and *mandate* to deliberate formalities or merely manipulated forms; reduction of the concept of *popular power*, or government in the *popular interest*, to nominal slogans covering the rule of a bureaucracy or an oligarchy." (Williams 1988, p.97)

Reading through Williams' brief description of the term democracy, I realise that one of the most outstanding instruments for the changes in the meaning of democracy must have been *reason*; reason as a construct to advance certain principles, ideas, and interests. As democracy is illusive in its singularity, so is reason. Reason is not universal; rather it is context-dependant. If reason was universal, then the world could be seen as a homogeneous, reason-bounded

Athens, 2003. Metaksurgio area.

system. In this scenario reason is an asset of certain people who are privileged with certain attributes such as education, social status, kinships and so on. Those who possess reason have more rights to publicness than those 'less rational.' In this hypothesis, socio-cultural attributes determine whose voices are more worthy to be heard by many and whose are to be silenced. Personal suffering, therefore, doesn't legitimise voicing claims and demanding justice if reason doesn't coincide; everyone may have stakes in emotions, not all in reason.

> "The process of the politically relevant exercise and equilibration of power now takes place directly between the private bureaucracies, special-interest associations, parties, and public administration. The public as such is included only sporadically in the circuit of power, […]" (Habermas 2003, p.176)

> "Whereas the relationship of the public sphere in the world of letters to that in the political realm was once absolutely constitutive for that central identification of 'property owner' with "human being" as such, without therefore viewing them as coextensive, there prevails today a tendency toward the absorption of the plebiscitary 'political' public sphere by one depoliticized through a preoccupation with consumption of culture." (Habermas 2003, p.177)

In so far as Habermas presents his argumentation through his critique of the 'today', his perspective is admittedly relevant. The state authorities interlocked with private interests, and a media pseudo-public sphere, are seriously challenging the voices of groups of people who are silenced; in addition to many of us who voluntarily resort to the mute mode of conducting our daily lives. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie of Habermas and their public sphere of rational and critical political debate has excluded not only women and dependents, as mentioned before, but a growing segment of the population.[56] If we consider the two basic characteristics of a bourgeois man, namely to be a property owner and a human being, then what has purposefully been called the "masses" is largely excluded from the bourgeois public sphere. The latter was relatively homogeneous, however, as the state and society intertwined and the private sphere weakened. Similarly, that homogeneity was challenged and the consensus of critical debate was replaced by silently forced compromise (Habermas 2003, p.179). The bourgeois public sphere came to be based on certain homogeneity between the participants, pretty much like the peers of the agonistic public space in the polis. This kind of public sphere has been lost, as long as we, all different people not necessarily owners, or literate, but certainly diverse human beings, desire to live together in this world. Furthermore, as Fraser showed, the Habermasian overarching public sphere is *one*; that alone in a world

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[56] Since the Greek *polis*, public sphere and the body politic have been normalised as exclusive; for women, slaves, non-citizens, and foreigners.

of recognized or unrecognised diversities, advocates flattening the field for domination and stratification to prevail (Fraser 1992, p.121-122). Habermasian rationality remains a vague notion for me, and questions like *who has the legitimacy of rationality* or *whose rationality*, remain puzzling. Habermas is consistent in his belief in the bourgeoisie as a reading "class," responsible for the birth of newspapers, remaining in a way confined to his own starting hypothesis. In any case, talking about the demise of the public sphere is somehow destracting our focus from the private sphere, which has been lessening through centuries of civil and urban development.

The dichotomy forced by the assumption that the private sphere expands against the public could be very much an illusion, as the opposite may be more prominently taking place. Is it possible that our private sphere has been so normatively consumed by the public sphere of civil society and public-private authorities that it has 'melted'? To my understanding, people attempt to reclaim the streets and public spaces recognizing that their private sphere has been invaded as much as the public, by commercialisation. The idea of a citizen-consumer has been tyrannically dominating our lives. And while it is an individual task to defend the private sphere and its essential intimacy, given how the authorities are shifting the framework of privacy, the public sphere admittedly requires a more common action publicly expressed. Although the reclaiming of a public sphere – be it streets, squares, or seafronts – is expressed more and more as a circumstantial outburst of a quasi-common conscience, the private sphere has been so valorised – by the media or the prevailing culture – that people are claiming a pervasive privateness in public sphere. Public and private have become a continuum, and the main characteristics of this continuum are the negotiations between submission and revolt towards normative structures of power.

2.4 SUBALTERN COUNTERPUBLICS

In this part I will concentrate on the views of Nancy Fraser (1992)[57] concerning the notions of private and public, and her critique on the structural transformation of the bourgeois public sphere. Concerning the ambivalence with which social democratic politics and feminism approached the relations between the state apparatuses, official economy, and public discourse

> "[...] the idea of the 'public sphere' in Habermas's sense is a conceptual resource that can help overcome such problems. It designates a theatre in modern societies in

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[57] Fraser, N. (1992). Rethinking the public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. In C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, pp. 109-142.

which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, and hence an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating than for buying and selling." (Fraser 1992, p.110-111)

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square.

Here Fraser merely admits to the possibilities Habermas opened presenting his bourgeois public sphere, only to follow immediately after with a long analysis of its shortcomings. Apart from the classism and sexism that Habermas left unchallenged within his model of public sphere – maybe in the name of a flattening equality between the participants of his public sphere – Fraser claims that Habermas, although accepting the fact that his liberal model of the public sphere was never realized in practice, meaning that it remained an ideal, didn't "examine other, non-liberal, non-bourgeois, competing public spheres." And in the relevant note Fraser writes:

"I do not mean to suggest that Habermas is unaware of the existence of public spheres other than the bourgeois one, on the contrary, in the Preface to Structural Transformation (p.xviii) he explicitly states that his object is the liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere and that therefore he will discuss neither the 'plebeian public sphere' (which he understands as an ephemeral phenomenon that existed 'for just

one moment' during the French revolution) nor 'the plebiscitary-acclamatory form of regimented public sphere characterizing dictatorships in highly developed industrial societies.' My point is that, although Habermas acknowledges that there were alternative public spheres, he assumes that it is possible to understand the character of the bourgeois public by looking at it alone in isolation from its relations to other, competing publics. […]." (Fraser 1992, p. 138)

Helsinki, 2003. Shopping mall in Myllypuro area.

Furthermore Fraser lists the four assumptions that render Habermas' bourgeois public sphere as "masculinist" (Fraser 1992, p. 117-8). Habermas assumed that the participants in the bourgeois public sphere, as private persons, were equals. Their differences need not be considered an issue since they were "bracketed." Therefore Habermas didn't see social equality as "a necessary condition for political democracy." He assumed that one unified and unifying public sphere is preferable to a conglomeration of many competing publics. Thirdly, Habermas thought of private matters as inappropriate for elaboration and discussion within the public sphere. Common good was the proper aim in the public sphere. Habermas' insistence on *reason* is deeply related to the *common good*, as he assumed that the latter required the former. Finally, according to Fraser, Habermas seems to have assumed that for a public sphere to work well and democratically, it needs a clear divide between state and society. As I understand it, Habermas' public sphere requires a dichotomy between public and private spheres, so that the one doesn't suffer from the expansion of the other; which actually happens, as Habermas demonstrated in his critique of modern times.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2001), in describing ways to make social sciences matter in our everyday lives, makes a conjunction necessary for democratic deliberation.[58] His argument echoes the plural and contested nature of the public sphere according to Fraser.

"[…] to enable democratic thinking and the public sphere to make a real contribution to democratic action, we have to tie them back to what they cannot accept in much of modern democratic theory: power, conflict, and partisanship."
(Flyvbjerg 2001, p.155)

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[58] Interestingly Flyvbjerg describes his model of democracy in various instances; one is his account of his research on the planning politics in the city of Aalborg. See Flyvbjerg (2001, p.144-161).

Public is Plural

Fraser's most important contribution to this discussion may be her response to the oneness of Habermas' public sphere, namely her concept of "subaltern counter publics" (Fraser 1992, p.122-4). This concept informs and suits my analysis concerning public spaces as physical expressions and facilitators of what Fraser calls subaltern counter publics. Much of my discussion on what I call *people's public face* is to be seen in relation to Fraser's ideas. Fraser claims that in societies that are stratified, divided according to numerous criteria – like gender, class, income, education, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. – social inequality cannot but pervade any arena reserved for discourse. *One* comprehensive public sphere for debate amongst equals would only advance the positions of the dominant groups at the expense of the less advantaged. Nevertheless the latter have and always have had their alternative publics, as arenas to construct their own counter debates to the dominant one. Fraser used the revisionist historiography records showing, for example, that women, the working class, coloured people, gay and lesbians, to name but a few, were always active in formulating their own agendas for social change within their enclaves. This phenomenon, Habermas considered as one of the reasons for the end of his bourgeois model of public sphere. Ironically, though, Habermas' ideal model never actualised, maybe because of the existence of these competing counter publics.

> "I propose to these [alternative publics] subaltern counterpublics in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs." (Fraser 1992, p.123)[59]

The fact that the subaltern counterpublics actually exist doesn't make society more just or eliminate social inequalities. Fraser clarifies that actually the "structured setting" that houses all these different counterpublics – society, urban physical space, etc. – supports some and actually may even fight against others (Fraser 1992, p. 125). Fraser considers the publicity of counterpublics to be a condition proving that they are not enclaves. However the previous two ideas seem to conceal a weak point; the possibility for a counterpublic to become an enclave, voluntarily or involuntarily, is always present. And it is exactly in stratified societies that the advancement of some counterpublics at the expense of others creates the conditions for retreat and enclaving. There is a dynamic potential in counterpublics emerging from the conflicts of different interests.

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[59] Fraser notes that she borrowed the terms "subaltern" from Gayatri Spivak and "counterpublic" from Rita Felski.

"The point is that in stratified societies, subaltern counterpublics have a dual character. On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides." (Fraser 1992, p.124)

"[…] that public life in egalitarian, multicultural societies, cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive public sphere. That would be tantamount to filtering diverse rhetorical and stylistic norms through a single, overarching lens."
(Fraser 1992, p.126)

Fraser moreover asks whether it is possible for these people with different values and codes of debate to reach an "agreement through giving reason." In doing so, Fraser doesn't discard the possibility of an overarching public sphere, which can be the embracing ground of the participants of different counterpublics. Different publics, according to Fraser, are open to overlapping and therefore to membership in more than one public. My point here is that Fraser herself doesn't elaborate to the full unfolding of her concept's potential. She refers to the different perspectives of someone outside a counterpublic, and of a member of a counterpublic. A member of a counterpublic is likely to consider all other counterpublics, rather than an overarching and comprehensive public. This intensifies the feeling of me or *us*, and *them*. Fraser realises this; however, she doesn't reveal its conflictive potential and its consequences. Instead she asks how members of different counterpublics can agree through giving reasons. The real potential for debate, exchange, and justifiable action, though, may lie in the potential of *disagreement*, and how this can be carried out without violence or individual or collective suffering. Our recent experience with terrorism has demonstrated the above. The fear of conflict works as a catalyst for *bracketing* the different or radically different views of various counterpublics. The ground for counterpublics to coexist, whether in stratified or egalitarian societies, may prove equally segregating if the fear of conflict is not recognised and worked through. The above discussion reveals a fundamental need for delineated counterpublics, each one bearing the potential to oppose the rest or some of the rest; which would constitute the public for a member of one or more counterpublics. It is possible that as the formation of counterpublics is limitless, there might be publics that are formulated because of and around issues that other publics consider private, or inappropriate for public discourse. Fraser gives as an example the feminists who succeeded in making the issue of domestic violence, considered private by the majority, a public concern worthy of public discourse (Fraser 1992, p.129).

"Democratic theory and practice, it seems to me, require both accepting Habermas's reasons for why democratic practice in broad mass society should encourage a single

public sphere, and also accepting Fraser's arguments for nurturing subaltern coun-
ter-publics. Those committed to democratic process should reject political theories
and practices which map the normative public-private distinction onto a distinction
between issues or discourses that are general and those that are particular. Such
theories distinguish issues, or kinds of discourses, that are properly public in the
sense of being oriented on a single common good, on the one hand, from discourses
and issues that are properly private because they are particularistic or divisive. Such
theories and practices impose a unity on the public sphere that usually excludes or
disadvantages some voices or perspectives. Democratic process ought to encourage
and enable the organizing of multiple and contesting discourses, forms of expres-
sion, and debates."
(Young 2002, p.172)

Such dynamic processes within counterpublics determine what is worthy of public
discourse, and place what is public and what is private, either in the sphere of constant
negotiation, in the case of egalitarian or relatively egalitarian societies, or in the service
of the dominant groups in the case of stratified societies. In the first case, the conditions
for negotiation, driven by consensus or not, are more facilitated by the state; something in
itself not entirely unproblematic. In the second case the possibility for negotiation may be
less facilitated, and conflict may erupt. In both cases, I believe, the fear of conflict exists;
however, it is expressed in different ways. That may even be the reason that conflict and
violence, when erupting in relatively egalitarian societies, is utterly shocking, and to a degree
incomprehensible by the majority. Fraser considers conflict as a possible outcome of any
discursive process, as people may agree or not on what the agenda of a public debate must
be. She believes that this kind of self-determination regarding what people might want as top-
ics for public contestation, or what Habermas would probably consider plebiscitary, should
be given guarantees to exist. Minorities must be given opportunities to argue about matters
that they consider worthy of public discourse, which in the past might have been considered
private (Fraser 1992, p.129). Importantly, Fraser acknowledges that conflict is an indispensa-
ble possibility when deciding what must emerge from the supposedly private realm into the
public. She writes:

> "[…] even in such relatively egalitarian societies, we cannot assume in advance that
> there will be no real conflicts of interest." (Fraser 1992, p.131)

She argues that the possibility to express a conflict of interests in public and to contest given
interests should be guaranteed as more positive than a consensus, which is often imposed by
a dominant group or the representatives of a dominant flattening majority. I suppose what I
am suggesting here is that conflict as a potential for democratic contestation is as necessary

to consider as is the provision of physical spaces of public representation. What I propose, concerning the above, is the management of the fear of conflict, instead of conflict management that undermines the democratisation of the public sphere. By policing, and preventive design and policies for public space, the dominant groups try to eliminate the opportunities for conflict to occur; meanwhile, little do we understand how many voices of difference we shut up.[60] The latter approaches are not the only means for social suppression; in our days and in market-led societies, they go hand in hand with economic suppression. Fraser towards the end of her article analyses why a post-bourgeois public sphere, permitting opportunities for publics to attain a voice of the level of decision making, would require an embracing of hybidity in regard to these publics. They may be *weaker* or stronger publics, depending on how successfully they can influence authoritative decisions; nevertheless, the authorities themselves must accept the agency and importance of these publics, and counterpublics.[61] By now, I feel even uncertain about the etymological precision of counterpublics, simply because *counter* suggest a dualism; one stake holder being public and the opposing being the *counter public*. I personally prefer the term *publics*, as plural as it can be.

Senses of Patriarchy

> "In general, critical theory needs to take a harder, more critical look at the terms 'private' and 'public.' These terms, after all, are not simply straightforward designations of societal spheres; they are cultural classifications and rhetorical labels."
> (Fraser 1992, p.131)

As true as this may be, as much, furthermore, as these terms may always have been normative, they remained basically oppositional. This opposition itself is a normative one, as it always allows for the subordination of disadvantaged social groups, always the private delimiting the public and vice-versa, and finally always providing an ideological apparatus for silencing some more than others. Fraser selects some of the senses of "private" and "public" prevailing in the Habermasian public sphere and in the contemporary modus operandi.

> "'Public,' for example can mean (1) state related, (2) accessible to everyone, (3) of concern to everyone, and (4) pertaining to common good or shared interest. Each of these corresponds to a contrasting sense of 'private.' In addition, there are two other

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[60] For more on the topic of fear of conflict as well as ideas of hearing voices of difference, see Sennett (1991, 1994, 2003), Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003) and Forester (2000), to name but few.

[61] For more about the concept of *weak*, see the concepts of *weak architecture* by Ignasi de Solá-Morales (1992 p. 58-71), and *weak place* by Panu Lehtovuori (2005, p.111-116).

senses of 'private' hovering just below the surface here: (5) pertaining to private property in a market economy and (6) pertaining to intimate domestic or personal life, including sexual life." (Fraser 1992, p. 128)

And a bit further:

> "Each of these senses [5 and 6] is at the center of a rhetoric of privacy that has historically been used to restrict the universe of legitimate public contestation. The rhetoric of domestic privacy would exclude some issues and interests from public debate by personalizing and/or familializing them; it casts these as private, domestic or personal, familial matters in contradiction to public, political matters. The rhetoric of economic privacy, in contrast, would exclude some issues and interests from public debate by economizing them; the issues in question here are cast as impersonal market imperatives or as 'private' ownership prerogatives or as technical problems for managers and planners all in contradiction to public, political matters. In both cases, the result is to enclave certain matters in specialized discursive arenas and thereby to shield them from broadly based debate and contestation." (Fraser 1992, p. 131-2)

Fraser claims that planners are among the people who, while working with matters of wider public interest, most often treat these matters and their work as private, in the sense of inappropriate for public discussion outside the comfortable arena of colleagues or decision makers. I would add to her "managers" and "planners" also researchers, academics, intellectuals and more, who consider publicity to be in synergy with populism. How does the knowledge researchers and academics acquire trickle down to policies and public debate?
Nowadays even in egalitarian societies of welfare states – such as the Finnish model, not to mention the less egalitarian liberal welfare states – there still exists an ideological framework holding onto compartmentalised knowledge, *patriarchal* male dominance, and disciplinary bureaucracy; pretty much as Helga Maria Hernes (1984, 1987) has pointed out in her critical analysis of Scandinavian welfare states. I consider the following two cases to be examples of the patriarchal male dominance.
a) AJ has researched the sociospatial discrimination that Albanian immigrants suffered in the area of Omonia Square in Athens.[62] There is still research underway regarding Omonia, however the results of this research are not necessarily considered in policy making; research is different than politics. Although AJ wasn't interested in the synergy between sociological research and politics, s/he expected politicians to take initiative and approach academics; it's

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[62] Discussion No35 (Athens 2.11.2004), with an academic
of Panteio University.

the state that must work to eliminate social discrimination.

b) The Spanish architect Ignasi de Solá-Morales presents many illuminating ideas about architecture. Reading his texts I envision Morales' archetypical architect as a self-referential practitioner who is enlightened and eloquent enough to be part of the highly intellectual architectural discourse.[63]

On the other hand one must never be oblivious of voices of dissent. The North-American architect J.B. Jackson, for example, with his studies and appreciation of the vernacular, was an architectural beatnik.[64] I understand as a duty of the researcher / activist to challenge "the separation of the pristine 'ivory tower' and the messy world of the 'streets'" (Hoggart *et al*. 2002, p.291), as the geographers Kitchin and Hubbard maintain that this separation

> "'[…] reinforces notions of modernist, rationalist science and seeks to maintain privileges attached to certain types of (academic) knowledge production over alternative ways of gaining understanding.'" (Kitchin and Hubbard 1999, p.195-196 cited in Hoggart et al. 2002, p.291)

There are many more voices that express similar concerns; Arendt has been one of them (Arendt 1998, p.324).

2.5 WOMEN IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Women's presence in the city has been widely debated.[65] Traditionally, and ever since the polis, women were confined to the safety of the domestic environment, where as Arendt has shown, labor was hidden from public view.[66] Feminists succeeded in challenging the male dominated patriarchal perspective of the *dichotomy* between public and private sphere and its spatial expressions of exclusion. Women, in all their diversities, have been pushing the debate for social change that has opened a 'Pandora's Box' concerning minorities' rights in general, and to the city in particular.

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63 See De Solá-Morales, I. (1999). *Differences. Topographies of Contemporary Architecture.* Edited by S. Whiting and translated from Spanish by G. Thompson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

64 See J.B. Jackson (1970, 1980, 1984, 1997).

65 See for instance, Elizabeth Wilson's (1991) *The Sphinx in the City*, as well as *Changing Place* edited *by* Chris Booth, Jane Darke and Susan Yeandle (1996).

66 Cohen (1991) presents a more malleable perspective on the Athenian *polis*.
"To begin with, there is a marked tendency to take the public/private dichotomy as an absolute ontological category and hence to confuse separation and seclusion. That is, it does not follow that because, generally speaking, the man's sphere is public/outside, and woman's private/inside, women live their lives in total isolation from all but their slaves and their family. […] While is is undeniable that women did not operate in the public and political spheres in the way that men did, it does not necessarily follow that they did not have public, social, and economic spheres of their own, nor that these categories were not fluid and manipulable as opposed to rigid and eternally fixed." (Cohen 1991, p.149)

Helsinki, 2003. Private security guards.

> "[…] the question of how women become full citizens of a democratic welfare state is more complex than may appear at first sight, because it is only in the current wave of the organized feminist movement that the division between the private and public spheres of social life has become seen as a major political problem."
> (Pateman 2000, p.251)

If anyone has vital reasons to dispute the oppressive dichotomy between public and private, women do. The importance, therefore, of women's perspective on our basic *dichotomy*, between public and private, is paramount.[67]

Hille Koskela, a Finnish geographer, has written extensively on gender and space within the Finnish context. She has argued against the harmonious (one sided) view of the welfare state, and has taken up women as a group that has been misinterpreted. She has examined

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67 On women in public and private spaces, see also Duncan, N. (1996). Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces. In N. Duncan, (ed.) *Body and Space*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 127-145.

> "[…] the presumption that Finnish women are strong and independent by exploring women's reactions to questions about their use of urban space. Are Finnish women actually bold in 'public space'?" (Koskela 1997, p.302)

The Finnish model,[68] if it is not debated systematically, will be another success story of a male dominated society, where, as tradition has it, the voices of difference, the voices of minorities, will remain silenced in a compromise for an alleged excellence. Koskela, with her work, has been breaking some of the myths regarding the Finnish model and gender equality.

> "Women are not merely objects in space where they experience restrictions and obligations; they also actively produce, define and reclaim space." (Koskela 1997, p.305)

New York, 2007. Manhattan, across from Liberty Square.

The point I see here is neither that women have indeed been oppressed by patriarchal norms nor that they are agents of change; the point rather is that many more groups of people have been mistreated and their rights disregarded by state authorities and majority norms, in public as well as in private spheres. And as women have been producing, defining, reclaiming, and also reproducing space, so have many other individuals and groups of stake holders.[69] That is why feminist discourse provides solid arguments for inequalities concerning the rights to the city.

Koskela describes the comfort that courageous women feel in urban space, to relate to certain at-*hominess* (Koskela 1997, p.307-8). Women were supposed until the end of 20th

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68 See Castells and Himanen (2002) *The Information Society and the Welfare State: The Finnish Model.*

69 "To unravel the nature of encounters in public space [in social space in general I would like to add] requires a consideration of the relational nature of identity that of-ten requires that one step out of an examination of dyads (man/woman; black/white; old/young) and look across categories to the ways in which people interact within and *across* matrices of power (e.g., black man/white woman; white adult/black child)." (Ruddick 1996, p.141)

century to feel more comfortable at home than in the public. This assumption, cultivated for many generations, has created the concept of a desirable *homeliness* in public. Could it be that the latter cooperates well with the dominant concept of the unhindered flow of people within public space, which Sennett (1991) and Mitchell (2003a, 2005b) have described in their work?[70] In other words, do women want as much as men a public sphere expressed physically in spaces where individuals avoid encountering the stranger; especially if the stranger has always been presented by patriarchs to be the dangerous one?[71] Women claim space with their choice of appearance (Koskela 1997, p.309). They may choose to fight against the male gaze either by covering themselves, registering themselves as invisible and safe, or by dressing up, and celebrating their presence in defiance of the male gaze. Muslim women in the West who follow the Islamic traditions of dress apparently have to suffer both the male and female gaze. Do they hide behind the veil or head scarf and long covering clothes to be safer from the male gaze, are they submitting to Islamic religion, and to Islamic men? Or are they celebrating their culture and identity? Or finally, could they be creating their own private sphere in public, a physical and quite literal *bubble*? I would like to point out that many women, of different cultural backgrounds, through inserting privateness into public space, or even creating public space,[72] seem to want to attain safety or a feeling of safety traditionally, and deceivingly, attributed to domestic environments.[73]

> "[…] it is not only violence in public spaces that causes fear. Also experiences in private spaces, like abuse in childhood, domestic violence, or rape by someone you know, can cause (among other mental changes) fear of public space." (Pain 1991, p.417 cited in Koskela 1997, p.313)

> "[…] for the Finnish women I interviewed the home environment was seen as relatively safe. Part of it is, of course, the fact that Helsinki (with slightly fewer than a million inhabitants in the whole metropolitan area), is a relatively small city. […] in a familiar environment it is easier to interpret the signs of danger, both the verbal and non-verbal ones." (Koskela 1997, p.307)

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[70] I refer here to Sennett's (1991) *The Conscience of the Eye and Mitchells'* (2003a, 2005b) *The Right to the City* and *The S.U.V. Model of Citizenship, Floating Bubbles, Buffer Zones, and the Rise of the 'Purely Atomic' Individual.*

[71] This complies with the whole discourse on women's physical weakness, as it happened in the past in regard to women's alleged moral weakness. For the latter see Elizabeth Wilson's (1991) *The Sphinx in the City.*

[72] "The prime factor should probably be seen in the underlying 'life politics', as in the case of young women who veil, which provides a model of possible activism in the public sphere and even partial creation of public space." (Salvatore 2004, p.1026)

[73] For more on Somali women in Finnish Diaspora see Marja Tiilikainen (2002, 2003).
"Increased veiling among Somali women [in Finland] is connected, on the one hand, to their increased religious knowledge and observance, and on the other hand, the necessity to preserve their own culture and identity. In addition, the veil gives women a private space, protects them physically and mentally, and legitimates their social participation." (Tiilikainen 2003, p.62)
"To understand women's reasons for donning the veil, or headscarf, one has to look beyond mere discourse. The decision to wear one is usually taken in stages and often consciously or even autonomously, in spite the general social

However, the safety of *home* is a myth. Koskela shows that Finnish women are still afraid to move around in their cities' public spaces, and at certain days, times, and places feel unsafe, one of the most dangerous places being stations and above all the main railway station at the centre of Helsinki (Koskela 1997, 1999).[74] Koskela presents the paradox that if *social experience* has *spatial consequences*, then how come the danger or violence women may experience at home translates into a certain fear in public? It is possible that domestic violence against women, having been silenced for many generations in the past, has been underestimated compared to the fear of being in public, which has been widely reproduced via education, parental advice and often exaggerated via the media.

> "However, many women in my research appeared to be good 'experts in urban semiotics.' It can be claimed that women are perhaps more qualified in this than men because they have often grown up with an alertness in the city because of harassment. Thus, I would argue that what is characteristic for women's relations to risky urban environment is their 'spatial expertise.'" (Koskela 1997, p.310)

Elsewhere, Koskela, talking about the exclusion of pregnant women in public space, suggests that registering pregnancy and motherhood as more public than strictly private affairs of human life would make women feel more welcome and safe in public. This idea of Koskela's to privatise, or as I call it *domesticate* public space so as to make it more inclusive is challenging, especially if we consider the extensive criticism of the privatisation of public space by private interests.[75] I don't understand domestication in this case as the commercialisation or the appropriation of the public by private or market interests. Domestication is related to attributes and affordances of the *home*, of the conventionally female domain, and how they can be brought into the public sphere not to colonise it per se, but to expand it.[76] And for that there is an urgent need in our contemporary, increasingly diverse urban environments.[77]

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pressure and pressure particularly from other women in the family or the workplace, or from fiancés and spouses. Other factors frequently include the need for paid work, the lack of income for buying and wearing expensive middle-class attire, and pressure not to be exposed to the 'temptations of life.' This new veiling has been interpreted as 'accommodating protest', a notion that stresses its contradictory but also active character (MacLeod 1991). Among Muslim women in Europe, veiling retains this ambivalence. Nevertheless, the potential intervention in Muslim traditions and the simultaneous contestation of the public sphere are more pronounced in Europe than in Muslim majority societies, and the European politics of the veil represents this complexity well." (Salvatore 2004, p.1017)

74 "In Helsinki, more broadly defined areas that are perceived to be unsafe are the city centre and the surroundings of the main railway station. The centre is commonly

perceived as dangerous: it is the place where most people go and where strangers encounter each other." (Koskela 1999, p.114)

75 This idea of domestication I analyse elsewhere in regard to my installation *Olohuone.*

76 Pauline von Bonsdorff (1999), in an article regarding public spaces that communicate, presents her perspective on the soothing effect of home-likeness.
"The Privatbanken bank in Helsinki, designed by Lars Sonck and Valter Jung, can be taken as an example of how the character of an institution and a business are conveyed by a building. Since this interior is relatively distant in time, the relations involved appear more distinctly. Seen from today's perspective, the interior of Privatbanken appears to be markedly home-like. The light was filtered in through the windows, creating and intimate ambiance. In the

Koskela advocates making public spaces more welcoming for pregnant women, and I would add, for all women. Women must unleash themselves from the normalised framework of domestic confinement and male dominance, by making public sphere, domain or space their home as much as it is for men. To feminise the public sphere is still a frightening perspective for our masculinist cities, as it conventionally implies chaos, disorder and instability rather than stability, discipline and order. Moreover, as Fraser (1997) shows, women couldn't but challenge the imposed borders between private and public.

> "The extraordinary struggle over Clarence Thomas's nomination […] also showed the need to revise the standard liberal view of the public sphere, which takes the categories of public and private as self-evident. This struggle showed, in contrast, that these categories are multivalent and contested. Not all understandings of them promote democracy. For example, male-supremacist constructions enshrine gender hierarchy by privatizing practices of domination like sexual harassment. They enforce men's privacy rights to harass women with impunity in part by smearing in public any woman who dares to protest. As Alan Simpson understood so well, women are effectively asked to choose between quiet abuse in private and noisy discursive abuse in public. […] feminist analysis shows the political, ideological, gender-coded character of these categories. And the feminist project aims in part to overcome the gender hierarchy that gives men more power than women to draw the line between public and private." (Fraser 1997, p.115)

Women evolved as dependents within frameworks of male dominance, violence and privacy, and felt fear and vulnerability not at home or outside, but noticeably *everywhere*. Danger for women was supposed to come from everywhere; therefore fear doesn't know borders and dichotomies. The "spatial expertise" Koskela talks about could consist of the fact that women don't see the divide between private and public as a comforting dichotomy, but as a continuum offering fear, violence, possibilities for emancipation, life and death.[78]

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middle of the main lobby there were sumptuous leather armchairs in which one could comfortably spend time waiting for one's turn. An amusing relief was placed above a small granite bench. Its realism stood out amidst the overall decoration of the spaces and it could be interpreted as representing a worried client negotiating with his bank manager. This was one of the features in the building displaying a blend of empathy and playfulness in relation to the visitor, which could be quite disarming. The aesthetic elements both brought forth and set aside the functions of the building." (Bonsdorff 1999, p.20)

77 There is a growing body of literature regarding this need for inclusiveness from various disciplines such as sociology, geography, political science, and arts and design.

78 "Cities offer choices: choices between anonymity and affiliation, choices of entertainment, job choices, identity choices. [...] The city offers an escape from stifling expectations. It can be lonely but is also liberating, especially for young women making a break from the prescriptions and presumptions of the family." (Darke 1996, p.97)
"Whilst the city offers diversity there have been many victims of those who use force to reduce diversity and to reassert their own dominance." (Darke 1996, p.98)

"Feelings of vulnerability cannot be expected to be spatially divided; in women's minds there is no opposition between private and public dimensions of fear."
(Koskela 1997, p.313)

Koskela (2000) chose to use the concept *emotional space* as more appropriate for describing public space under surveillance, as lived and experienced by those who are being watched; the women. She talked about an ambivalent space, of feelings of safety, unnecessary guilt, fear, discomfort, and/or anger.

"Emotional space may be difficult to understand because it cannot be described in static terms; it evades definitions and remains 'untouchable.' However, emotions such as fear of violence do, arguably, shape one's interpretation of space […]. They [feelings] are not mathematical functions of actual risks but the complicated products of personal experience and memory. In the context of emotional space, the practical issue of video-surveillance is not something one can either oppose or support: it is far more complex." (Koskela 2000, p.259)

Our emotions, I agree with Koskela, are undervalued and emotional space represents a sphere that Arendt might have characterised as a by-product of social sphere, where the intimate and personal seeks to reclaim part of its integrity. This concerns women in all their variety as well as men. The boundaries of privateness and publicness in urban space are blurred institutionally, as much as this is useful for the public, semi-public and even private authorities, the market economy, and commercial interests. Koskela, by regarding gender and control in the public sphere does what Sandercock and Forester propose when they advocate listening to the voices of difference. According to my understanding, the emotional is beyond the dichotomy between public and private spheres, domains, realms or spaces. And if I interpret Koskela correctly, maybe women indeed experience public and private less as an imposed dichotomous norm and more as an on-going condition of negotiation that requires complex skills, beyond mere conformity or appropriative power.[79]

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[79] Marcel Hénaff and Tracy B. Strong (2001), in their perspective on the separation between private and public maintain that: "The figure in public sight thus occupies a position, that is, embodies an image of what may be expected of him or her. The fulfilment of this requirement may sometimes be in contradiction with the private sphere, with an individual's intimate convictions or with personal preferences. The gap is unavoidable: it indicates, on the one hand, the transcendence of the position in relation to the individual and shows, on the other, the necessary difference between public choices (which involve the community) and personal preferences. It is not simply that the public and the private should be kept separate: they are unavoidable as such." (Hénaff and Strong 2001, p.9)

Barcelona, 2003. Street Advertisement.

Gendered Dichotomies

In her book *Space, Gender and Place*, Doreen Massey (1994) pointed at a number of issues that are very relevant to our discussion of the dichotomy between public and private. Massey argues that dualisms and dichotomies, such as space/place, space/time, immanence /transcendence, and others, reproduce the norms of sexism in our societies.

> "It is important to be clear about what is being said of this relationship between space/time and gender. It is not being argued that this way of characterizing space is somehow essentially male; there is no essentialism of feminine/masculine here. Rather, the argument is that the dichotomous characterization of space and time, along with a whole range of other dualisms which have been briefly referred to, and with their connotative interrelations, may both reflect and be part of the constitution of, among other things, the masculinity and femininity of the sexist society in which we live." (Massey 1994, p. 259)

Massey has shown that dualism and dichotomies guide us to a certain type of conceptualisation and perception, according to lack or deficiency. The model is well known and challenged time and again, especially by feminist theorists, and still it remains a dominant norm; whenever there is A there is Not-A too. Not-A is lacking A; as in male/female, female lacking male.

> "Now, of course, in current western culture, or in certain of its dominant theories, woman too is defined in terms of lack. Nor, as we shall see, is it entirely a matter of coincidence that space and the feminine are frequently defined in terms of dichotomies in which each of them is most commonly defined as not-A."
> (Massey 1994, p.257)

The public/private distinction fits this way of thinking extremely well, and as we have seen this has always been so, ever since the polis; this persistent dichotomy seems no more or less persistent than some of the other dichotomies existing in the vicious circle of power struggle and dominance. It is this persistence that I find challenging and worthy of inquiry. Already at the beginning of her book Massey suggests the un-worldliness of such oppositional, dichotomous thinking; better than A and Not-A, it is the changing continuum that describes what we live.

> "[…] space-time as a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity. Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power

and signification. Such way of conceptualizing the spatial, moreover, inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism. Most evidently this is so because the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it." (Massey 1994, p. 3)

Lefebvre would probably agree with Massey concerning space and social relations as she challenged the compartmentalisation of everyday life. Her "multiplicity of spaces" is very relevant for our sense of the vernacular in the world, as well as for questioning specificities which we tend to oversimplify by not examining them in a relational context. In our case, public and private as notions have multiple significations, and their opposition as such has had a multiple character. This multiplicity is due to relational contexts, whether or not we agree to call them social per se. It is possible that through these relational contexts we can comprehend the non-essentiality of normative dichotomies like feminine/masculine, or private/public. The actor network theory may seem irrelevant for configuring the above relational contexts, however I am inclined to think that the relations that engender the multiplicity of space/time/place/position/local/global, are shaped by human as well as non-human agents.[80] It is in this sense that I would suggest expanding the "social relations" of Massey to *relational contexts*, where we are *part* of the whole, and not the whole as such.[81] Massey placed the crucial moment for the development of the dichotomy between private/public historically in the mid-twentieth century Europe and modernism. Modernism and its glory was celebrated and expressed in the public spaces of the city; a city for men. Women's confinement to the sphere of the private and domestic restricted their participation in modernity. That participation did occur, however, even when celebrated; it was always in a relative domination by men.[82] Women were entering the public sphere of paid employment outside household labor and were becoming *income earners*. They were thus entering the public sphere of the city, which was for men.

> "It wasn't so much 'work' as 'going out to' work which was the threat to the patriarchal order. And this in two ways: it threatened the ability of women adequately to perform their domestic role as homemaker for men and children, and it gave them an entry into public life, mixed company, a life not defined by family and husband." (Massey 1994, p.198)[83]

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[80] See Hassard, J. and Law, J. (eds.) (1999). *Actor Network Theory and After.* Oxford: Blackwell.

[81] As political beings in the sense of Arendt. See Arendt's (1998, p. 23-27) distinction between social and political.

[82] See Wilson's (2003) account on the position of women in the avant-garde *Bohemia* of that era.

[83] Let's not make the mistake and assume that this kind of thinking belongs to backward societies. With international

The famous flâneur of Baudelaire was the soul of the modern city, and it was a man consuming the city with his gaze and stroll. Respectable women were not allowed to be circulating in public alone.

"In part, the notion of a flâneuse is impossible precisely because of the one-way-ness and the directionality of the gaze. Flâneurs observed others; they were not observed themselves. And, for reasons which link together the debate on perspective and the spatial organization of painting [Massey before has talked about the male oriented iconography of modernity], and most women's exclusion from the public sphere, the modern gaze belonged (belongs?) to men." (Massey 1994, p.234)

Beijing, 2005.

While the city is erotic, women were and still are objects and not subjects of the eroticism of the city. From the female sex workers to women's images publicly displayed in the context of even non commercial advertisement, women find themselves in a very awkward position between a private and public lag space. If nowadays women have conquered more and more their right to be part of the public sphere and have broken their confinement from the private sphere, their participation is still limited through their iconographic representations as predominantly privatised. This privatisation has been taking place by normalising the role of women as sexualised, and re-confined in a sphere of intimacy. The gaze in the public sphere at the city remains male, and women remain heavily prostituted on billboards, banners, and adverts all around us. Women, it seems, can never be in public, because even if they are, they remain essentially gendered, sexualised and therefore, I believe, symbolically confined in the sphere of the intimate.[84]

Once more we realise that the dichotomy between private and public is a culturally constructed normative mechanism. Women are obliged to negotiate the boundaries between private and public; this renders private and public more as a relational continuum of struggle for emancipation and rights to the city.

migration the Christian West is more and more facing customs and beliefs of Islam. This has caused, and will continue to cause, fearful debates amongst all stake holders. We in the West are challenged to face our own prejudice and discriminatory misconceptions.
"The place of women is at home." (From the documentary *Me and My Mosque* by Zarqa Nawez. Finnish Television TV1 31.05.2006, 19:05) as an attitude is holding strong within cultures which claim to be Islamic as well as in Western cultures. In addition, we have more and more to redefine

home; what constitutes home, and who has attributed hominess to home? Doreen Massey has given a few different perspectives, bell hooks' being one of the most challenging (Massey 1994, p.166-7, 171-2, 180).

[84] For more on the Sexualisation of women through representation in the public sphere of the city, see Hirdman, Anja (2004). *Mirrored Masculinity? Turning the Perspective of Sexualization and Representation Around*. NIKK magasin. Vol. 3/2004, pp. 8-11.

2.6 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE IN DIASPORA

> "The best school for dialectics is emigration. The sharpest dialectical philosophers are the refugees. They've been made refugees by great changes. They sit amongst the rubbish in their camps, under the stars, plotting victory from the catastrophe all around them. They study what their enemies have done to them to spot the tiniest contradictions, then wham, they're into the crack with their knives out." (Brecht 1986, p.13)

This chapter inquires into the role of presumptuous norms in shaping and predetermining discussions concerning the position of immigrants in our cities, particularly in Europe, whether Finland or Greece. These discussions concerning multiculturalism, immigrants' integration, and diasporic space in our cities tend to universalise western norms and boost Eurocentrism. By disregarding what is fundamental in such discourses, namely the intercultural communication based on the mutual respect between a majority host society and minorities, we tend to impose our perspective on life and how it should be lived, on people whose perspectives we register as valuable (in the name of political correctness) but ultimately irrelevant, as they are in *our* context, in *our* country.

> "There can be almost 'racist' beliefs about what other societies are like, which promote a sense of Finland as safe and familiar. […]In this case travel experiences were used to stigmatise other societies and by this process to gain confidence in a more familiar environment." (Koskela 1997, p. 307)

Koskela was trying to explain how some Finnish women's trips abroad have made them register Finland as a safe place, adding a racist undertone towards other cultures. If one considers her/his national space to be better and safer than elsewhere, then it is very likely that s/he assumes that foreigners should appreciate this orderly and safe environment as much as s/he does, or even more. When refugees and immigrants come to Finland, they are assumed to be grateful that Finland is their host country, especially if they come from strife and famine, like for instance Somalia. The same applies in regard to how Greeks expect Albanian immigrants to feel in Greece. We *assume*. We may be better off, though, challenging our own assumptions, not only ours as host countries but also ours as aliens in other countries. In order for the much desired enculturation to happen, hosts and foreigners have to start from very basic issues. Issues like what is private and public for a Muslim Somali man and woman, or for an atheist or Muslim Albanian?

> "Rest and encounter are existential basic needs concerning all human beings. 'Rest' means physical and mental retirement from the world for a while, in order to gather

strength for new encounters. 'Encounter' means to encounter all kinds of things and beings, to build one's world and earn a living, to gain membership in social networks. For immigrants, 'new' and 'strange' often define their encounters in a new society, thus giving a different meaning for the 'rest', too. However, during the course of time the 'new' and 'strange' tend to become familiar."(Hynynen 2004, p. 210)

"In the shelter of the home, it is possible to be 'invisible', to retreat back to one's own culture and identity. At home, one's cultural heritage can also be taught to the next generation. […] Cherishing one's own cultural identity is crucial to one's well-being, and home is the first place to do this, but home also mediated a more direct integration. Through the practices of dwelling, it is possible to get to know Finnish neighbours and to become acquainted with the rules and norms of the new society through the regulations of the housing estate." (Hynynen 2004, p.213)

Ari Hynynen (2004) discusses issues of Russian and African immigrants' integration in the urban setting of the host Finnish society.[85] He maintains that spatial appropriation is an important strategy for integration, and presented his analysis on how these appropriative processes take place. Hynynen presents his ideas about spatial appropriation with the help of Lefebvre, in order to explain how immigrants create spaces in *our* cities. He uses a wide range of spatial categorisations; places of rest, basically the home; places of encounter, predominantly referring to work and consumption places; soft institutions like free-time meeting places, cafés, restaurants, certain streets, places for leisure and sports and multicultural centres; absolute spaces, where Hynynen refers to nature and religious places; and finally, spaces of movement, referring to public or private transportation (Hynynen 2004, p. 208-222). Hynynen demonstrated how immigrants tend to appropriate all these categories of spaces, never questioning, though, the categories themselves; and most importantly, what does this classification that he suggested mean for the western umbrella concept of private and public. I insist on the importance of what Hynynen implies especially in regard to the dichotomy between public and private, although the terms public and private are absent from Hynynen's article. We read that immigrants rest at home; home, being the place where the immigrant families can live according to their customs.

"Employment also enables integration into institutions of consumption, which are encountered daily in different shopping places. They provide the necessary material base for everyday life. Immigrants are also supposed to be treated decently and have

85 Hynynen, A. (2004). Places of Integration-Appropriation of Urban Space by Immigrants. In V. Puuronen, A. Häkkinen, A. Pylkkänen, T. Sandlund & R. Toivanen (eds.) *New Challenges for the Welfare Society*. Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Publications of Karelian Institute, pp. 208-222.

a good assortment of goods. […] Places of hard institutions – hard places – are pro-
duced by processes, which lead to structural integration. However, this does not only
mean integration into a cycle of production and consumption and earning a living, it
also has significance in the dimension of identification. Access to practices in hard
places entails social credibility and equality among dominant groups. Due to this, the
idea of oneself as a member of a new society becomes clear." (Hynynen 2004, p.215)

According to Hynynen, immigrant cultures are predominantly lived, or relived, celebrated
and enacted at the private sphere of the domestic environment. Considering the spaces of
encounter, Hynynen considers consumer society and employment to be a basic means of
integration. Places of consumption may be the favourite hang outs for us people encultured
in the West, however this doesn't mean that non-Western immigrants approve of or enjoy
this.[86] According to my informants from Nigeria, window-shopping wasn't their favourite
amusement, arguing that not being able to afford all those goods on display doesn't give
much reason for such a hobby. Another informant, from Somalia this time, explained to me
how Helsinki Railway Station was perceived by Somali people as more informal and social
according to their cultural background, as well as to their social needs in the host country.[87]
Diasporic identities are not clothes to change according to the occasion, instead they are
constant and while they are transformed, they seek to transform too. Allowing this process to
unravel creates a challenge for all stake holders.

Hynynen's absolute space encompasses a very important part of many immigrants liveli-
hood, namely religion. Islam is very relevant in the Finnish context, for a large number of
African immigrants and Somali refugees are followers of Islam. Hynynen defined religious
practice as teaching and rituals in the mosque, although in his own words:

> "A place of religion can also exist in a normal home. […] To make a place of nature
> or religion is to spatialise and concretise the symbols and deep values attached to them.
> Absolute space is lived space, which is able to create a sense of communion in one's own
> life. The practices of absolute space are based more on cultural conventions, not so
> much on conceptualising space itself." (Hynynen 2004. p. 218)

Let's recapitulate: home is the space of rest where an immigrant may choose to enact her/
his cultural identity or not. The space for an immigrant to enact her/his religion is a religious
space, like the mosque. Hynynen analysed the role of 'soft' places or institutions, such as
multicultural centres, meeting places, cafés, etc., in the integration of immigrants into the
host society, and how they appropriate and make such places of encounter in the city.

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[86] Discussion No8 (Helsinki, 12.4.2003), with A and B two
Nigerian students.

[87] Discussion No27 (Helsinki, 27.6.2004), with a
Somali man.

"The immigrant women are generally more often tied to their homes than their husbands and immigrant men. Yet, they also tend to seek proper meeting places outside homes. In Joensuu, the different handwork clubs seem to be quite popular, some of them gathering in Aurora [a multicultural centre in Joensuu, the Finnish city that Hynynen examines]. These clubs also offer occasions to present one's own culture in an aesthetic form." (Hynynen 2004, p.216)

This is the reference Hynynen made in regard to immigrant women. There is a need to elaborate on the issue of the appropriation of city space by immigrant women. If not, they are rendered invisible.

There is an increasing debate about diasporic space, or transnational space, the in-between space of migrants' lives, of legal and illegal immigrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers. The discourse as such has been necessary for the 150 million migrants in the world away from their countries and homes.[88] I would like to briefly comment on the 'novelty' of *diasporic* or *transnational space*. People have been migrating forever, voluntarily or not. If migrants have been seen all through the history of migration as poor people, competent work force, cheep expendable labor, or people in need of protection for their lives, that doesn't mean that they lacked at any moment their capacity as agents of change. Laura M. Agustin (2003) has proposed that transnational agency should not be forgotten. Maybe it is this kind of discourse that eventually brought into question the position of transnationals in host societies.[89] The other point I would like to make is this: there is often the tendency to talk about diasporic or transnational space interchangeably, referring to immigrants mostly and refugees. Perhaps

Helsinki, 2003. Meri Rastila area.

transnational discourse should encompass migrants in all our variety, multiplicity and complexity. I have discussed Hynynen's spatial categorisations of place-making by certain immigrant groups in Finland. Next, with the help of Armando Salvatore (2004) I discuss public and private as contested conditions in the lives of Muslims in Europe.[90]

[88] See Hynynen (2004, p. 111).

[89] See Agustin (2003); Bowen (2004); Madanipour (1996, 1998); Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003); Sassen (1997).

[90] Salvatore, A. (2004). Making Public Space: Opportunities and limits of Collective Action among Muslims in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* Vol. 30(5), pp. 1013-1031.

Unveiling

"The iconic power of the veil relates to the fact that the secularly trained eye perceives the way it crosses, whether intentionally or not, the well-entrenched border between private and public spheres as the epitome of the essential threat of Islam in Europe. Indeed, many perceive it as a de facto tool of proselytising or at the very least as a symbolic colonisation of the public space, which is supposed to be free of religion. The preoccupation with veiling in both scholarly and journalistic accounts can be interpreted as resulting from the perception that such a symbol contaminates the secular sacrality of public space. […] The issue of the entry of Muslim traditions into European public spheres is, nonetheless, more complex than a mere 'visibilisation' and must be understood in relation to the history of the European formulas for the separation of religion and politics, and private and public, and private and public spheres. The intersection of these two codes of separation that were essential to the formation of nation-states is in the administrative delimitation of a religious field and its subjection to state monitoring. With the separation of private and public spheres, religion was barred from the latter but was considered constitutive of the 'inner forum' of man, that is, the moral engine of the private sphere." (Salvatore 2004, p.1017-8)

Arendt in her *Human Condition* shows how Christianity constituted the first private sphere after the *polis* and the *res publica*.[91] The Christian Church and the salvation of the human soul became a private matter of great importance, especially for the disenfranchised, detaching from the public sphere and its body politic. The Christian Church was based on the archetype of family and brotherhood ties. Therefore, political activity was considered to be of low status, as it didn't contribute to salvation and the eternal life. Armando Salvatore seems to agree and takes this position further. He holds responsible for the European fear of religiosity, and especially of Islam, on the one hand the traumatic experience of blood bathed religious wars, and on the other hand the traditional Christian conflict against backward Islam.[92] Meanwhile, we have to understand that within Islam there isn't homogeneity; for example Larbi Sadiki (2004, p.311) writes that while for Islamist feminists, Islam is "inextricable from every facet of life," for secularist feminists, Islam "is a private matter." If we return to veiling according to Salvatore, we may see how a religious and/or cultural custom practiced in European public space creates waves of

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[91] Arendt, H. (1998). *The Human Condition.* Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 52-62, 73-74, 314-317.

[92] "The racial and religious dimensions that added to the 'civilisational' justifications of colonial wars waged by European powers against predominantly Muslim populations in Africa and Asia provide an additional legacy to this genealogy of religiously motivated violence in and by Europe." (Salvatore 2004, p.1022)

New York, 2005. Liberty Square, Broadway Av. and Liberty St., Manhattan.

passionate debate and strong emotions because it should be a domestic practice. From the South to the North of Europe, Islamophobia has deep roots in traditions and cultures, so much so that the dichotomy between public and private seen under this light may be a repressive and disciplinary mechanism for the claims of Muslims over *our* public space. The supposed conflict that European authorities try to prevent between the Muslims in Europe and the Christian majority is not a conflict of morals or moral etiquette. It is not only about scarves, or veils, flesh exposure or no flesh exposure (women's by the way), secularism or fundamentalism. It is still about control, power, and the market economy. The dichotomy between public and private spheres inherent in European societies is not at odds with the patriarchal and traditional forms of certain Islamic authorities. On the contrary, the division serves very well the male dominance advocated by some Islamic groups. Salvatore suggests that an *agonistic confrontation* is needed in our hosting societies, on the one hand to challenge the Muslim traditions of domestic repression of women by men and other women, and on the other to challenge norms about what belongs to the public sphere and what to the private (Salvatore 2004, p. 1025).

"The movement of Muslims into public space and their determined but often fragile strivings to make public space, like Muslim women reflectively wearing the headscarf

in schools and public professions, signal the religiously determined character of their openness and their way of going public and challenge the idea of the mere coexistence between abstract, mutually aseptic others as members of a pre-established game to reach a consensus within a one-dimensional public sphere." (Salvatore and Amir-Moazami 2002 cited in Salvatore 2004, p.1027).

If Hynynen speaks of immigrants' spatial appropriation in a Finnish town as a mean for integration, Salvatore presents the deep divide between European secularism (though incorporating Christian values) and Muslim culture and religion, which if overlooked, the resulting compromise cannot be fair to those whose *voices of difference* are not loud enough or are not heard enough.[93] Salvatore suggested that Habermas' lifeworlds, which cut through public and private spheres, should be the model for "new forms of public communication giving space to different traditions of engagement and discourse and also to different conceptions of the public sphere" (Salvatore 2004, p.1030). He recognizes the emancipating potential for Muslim women in Europe, in the challenging of the patriarchal traditions of the private sphere.

My upbringing in the European South-East may prove enlightening in describing a different perspective of Hynynen's spaces for *rest*. According to the customs and traditions of my homeland, the house was a sacred but not exclusive space. If the family was large and poor enough, nobody had the luxury of privacy in their own house. The neighbours too had *rights of presence* that could drive crazy the tired bread winner who wanted to rest. I remember fondly Mrs. Irene, a next-door neighbour to our old big house, who would drop by at almost any time of the day to exchange a few words, or my grandmother who would spend hours in the front yard. In societies like the Greek of maybe a decade or two ago, communality was appreciated and individualism was at odds with Christian values; then again in Greece secularisation is a work in process. The Northern Welfare states of Europe accomplished secularisation, incorporating successfully some of the Christian values,[94] as well as progressive individualism and a strong sense of privacy. In Greece, family is considered fundamental and in need of divine blessing. Privacy in Greek culture had been a questionable condition, after all Orthodoxia[95] had also blurred the divide between public and private; a private person was someone who had affairs to keep in secret from public scrutiny. I have described something that sounds backward. Nowadays the modernisation has altered communality and urban customs in Greece for good; it will still take long until mentalities alter. I was surprised to hear from a Somali acquaintance that he was generally sympathetic towards Greeks due to the fact that we are religious; meaning we have moral values not shared by the secular, individual-

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93 See also Safi, Omid (ed.) (2003). *Progressive Muslims.* Oxford: Oneworld.

94 The protestant work ethics for instance.

95 In Greece, as mentioned elsewhere by Marina Petronoti (1996), Orthodox religion, "Orthodoxía" and the quality of being Greek (*Héllinas*) "Hellinismós," are indispensable and tightly intertwined.

istic, and consumer societies of Northern Europe. I was surprised because Greece still ranks high amongst countries with xenophobia and racist attitudes, particularly against Islam.[96] In fact, the threat of the Muslim world seems to affect Greeks equally regardless if it is triggered in public by the sight of a veiled women (a very rare sight indeed in Athens for example) or Arabic music coming from a neighbour. The cliché of the front doorstep with the Greek lady in black knitting may be a dated exotic image for many, but not for many of us Greeks; the continuum between public and private almost guaranteed that rest spaces could very well be in public. I often refer to a picture I took of a Muslim elderly man clipping his nails on a public bench in a Dutch city. It may be overstated however that person was appropriating public space by bringing a private even intimate activity out in the public. I suspect that this can be explained in many ways, one being that which Arendt presented as the expansion of the intimate into the sphere of social and at the cost of the public sphere. Another would be simply a different perspective of private and public, a perspective not encompassed by the advanced central and northern European civility.

Experts who teach, research, or influence policies, once more, have a great responsibility in the *unlocking* of diasporic space. G said that the policy of the city of Helsinki to disperse the ethnic minorities, in order not to segregate them, leads to the invisibility of different ethnic identities in the city.[97] S/he also indicated that there are Finns, like him/her, who don't encounter people of ethnic minorities in their daily routine, since the areas in which they move are very different from the areas where foreigners move.[98]

Netherlands, 1997. A Muslim man clipping his nails in public.

96 See Imam, M. & Tsakiridi, O. (2003). *ΜΟΥΣΟΥΛΜΑΝΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΟΣ ΑΠΟΚΛΕΙΣΜΟΣ*. [Muslims and Social Exclusion]. Athens: Livani (in Greek). See also on line the IHF Report 2001 (pdf).

97 Discussion No4 (Helsinki, 17.3.2003), with a Finnish urban scientist.

98 See also Vaattovaara, M. & Kortteinen, M. (2003). Beyond Polarisation versus Professionalisation? A Case Study of the Development of the Helsinki Region, Finland. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 40(11), pp. 2127-2145.

2.7 DICHOTOMIES OF SUPPRESSION

It is increasingly difficult to cater to and facilitate the needs of the 'Other.' Don Mitchell (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005b) discusses homeless people, as well as other groups of the 'Other' in the United States. Mitchell shows how the state and semi-public and private interests are lobbying to literally eliminate homeless people, and not the conditions causing homelessness. He also presents how the dichotomy between public/private is a suppressive mechanism used liberally by the dominant stake holders, against for example diverse sexualities.[99]

> "Difference itself is scary to a lot of people, and so, unsurprisingly, sex and sexuality have become one of the keenest fronts in the culture wars. […] 'I don't care *what* other people do, as long as I do not have to see or hear about it.' Such a sentiment, as its most benign, aligns itself with a liberal and libertarian philosophy of individual rights of others, in this case defined as the right not to have to think about sexual activities different from one's own. The argument asserts that what occurs in private is of no concern to anyone but those engaging in that activity. Actions in public, however, must conform to the dictates of the 'normal' or hegemonic society. Yet the very savageness with which cultural battles over sexuality are fought-in the media, on the streets (through such practices as 'queer-bashing'), in the courts, and the police-quickly give the lie to the sharp divide between public and private that such sentiments demand." (Mitchell 2000, p. 177)

Moreover, Mitchell agrees that it is maybe better to understand both public and private actions and spaces as a continuum with varying degrees of publicness or privateness.

> "Indeed, Staeheli shows that activists have long known this. Just as, on the one hand, events like gay kiss-ins and mothers' public breast-feeding campaigns throw into question the sexist and heterosexist nature of public spaces by bringing putatively private actions into them, many activists have found that putatively private spaces of their everyday lives-home and workplace, for example-are the best loci for public political action (organizing, letter-writing, etc.)." (Mitchell 2000, 211)

Mattilda a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore (2004) is the editor of *That's Revolting*, concerning the experience, shaping of, and fights over public space by people of different

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99 See also, Valentine, G. (1996). (Re)negotiating the 'Heterosexual Street.' In N. Duncan (ed.) *Body and Space*. London, New York: Routledge, pp. 146-155.

New York, 2005. Chelsea.

sexual identities and bodies. Therein lays activism, violence and death, humour and bitterness, happiness and suffering. The suppressed identities Mattilda describes are confined to the sphere of the private, and their right to publicness is curtailed.

> "Imani Henry elaborated on the stages of the gentrification process taking hold: 'If you are a rich developer and you want to make sure that this is prime real estate, then you are going to do everything in your power to get community boards and the kinds of clientele that can afford to pay $3,000 for a studio. And you are going to get the police to do watches on the streets and harass people and close clubs down, and file phoney violations on spaces, and literally physically arrest, brutalize, and beat people to get them out of that area.' The point was to make the people who rent those $3,000 studio apartments feel at home. 'You are not supposed to see drag queens', Henry explained. 'God forbid there are no trans women. There are no sex workers. There are no youth. There are no people of color.' " (Shepard 2004, p.110)[100]

Lefebvre called the kind of space that Henry described and criticised *abstract*; in his own words:

> "Formal and quantitative, it erases distinctions, as much those which derive from nature and (historical) time as those which originate in the body (age, sex, ethnicity). […] The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeav-

ours to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there." (Lefebvre 1997, p.49)

Lefebvre (1997), in his *Production of Space* shows that public and private are tools for suppression by the ruling elites.[101]

> "[…] the ideology of structuralism, wearing the mantle of knowledge, serves power. The second point is that 'operational' notions of arrangement or classification govern the whole space, and apply as much to private as to public space, as much to furnishings as to overall spatial planning. Such notions clearly serve power by contributing to a global homogenizing trend. After all, it is the state-'public', and hence political, authority-that does the arranging and classifying. Operationalism of this kind actually conflates 'public' space with the 'private' space of the hegemonic class, or fraction of a class, that in the last analysis retains and maintains private ownership of the land and of the other means of production. It is therefore in appearance only that the 'private' sphere is organized according to the dictates of the 'public' one. […] The whole of space is increasingly modelled after private enterprise, private property and the family-after a reproduction of production relations paralleling biological reproduction and genitality." (Lefebvre 1997, 375-6)[102]

Lefebvre registers the *grid(s)* as tools to normalise life's complexities. The grid is a very commonly used tool for architects and planners ordering and structuring space at various scales.

> "As tools of formal knowledge, all such concepts have a precise aim, which is to eliminate contradictions, to demonstrate a coherence, and to reduce the dialectical to the logical. Such an intent is immanent to a knowledge that aspires to be 'pure' and 'absolute' while remaining ignorant of its own raison d'être- which is to reduce reality in the interests of power." (Lefebvre 1997, p.367)

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100 Shepard, B. (2004). Sylvia and Sylvia's Children: A Battle for a Queer Public Space. In Mattilda a.k.a. M. Bernstein-Sycamore (ed.) *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation.* New York: Soft Skull Press, pp. 97-112.

101 "Such are the workings of a 'logic'-i.e. a strategy. This sequence of operations implies a productive consumption: the consumption of a space, and one that is doubly productive in that it produces both surplus value and another space. The production of space is carried out with the state's intervention, and the state naturally acts in accord-

ance with the aims of capital, yet the production *seems* to answer solely to the rational requirements of communication between the various parts of society, as to those of a growth consistent with the interests of all 'users.'" (Lefebvre 1997, p.374-5)

102 Structuralism is a method of analysis based on relationships of contrast between elements in a conceptual system. Operationalism in philosophy is a form of positivism which defines scientific concepts in terms of the operations used to determine or prove them.

As I understand this, private and public can be seen as attributes of a grid, which as all grids – tools of formal knowledge – are at the service of power, of the bureaucratic state and capital, to order the realm of our everyday life.[103] Lefebvre maintains the distinctness and interconnectedness of public and private spaces as material outlets of the corresponding spheres, in a rather conventional sense; public space is the outside space of the community, while private is the indoor space of family life.[104] In an optimal scenario public space is dominated by state authorities, and public or semi-public as well as private stake holders. The space of the family life, Lefebvre writes, is at best appropriated (Lefebvre 1997, p. 166). While in the view of Arendt (1998) private life shrinks under the increasing publicness of the social sphere. Habermas' idea (2003) of the tyranny of mediated publicity (media) over the sphere of the private, probably doesn't leave many options open for appropriation of our private sphere. Lefebvre in general hasn't been a great believer in people's agency.[105] On the other hand, he questions public and private as parts of a suppressive mechanism and he connects their division to property. It is in a way property that is essentialised by Lefebvre, in a way that possibly resonates with Arendt.

> "What prevented the polis from violating the private lives of its citizens and made it hold sacred the boundaries surrounding each property was not respect for private property as we understand it, but the fact that without owning a house a man could not participate in the affairs of the world because he had no location in it which was properly his own." (Arendt 1998, p.29-30)

Is it possible that while private and public concern different functions, the regulation of these functions is being used by elites as a tool to discipline the masses and control social dissent? Is it possible that the dichotomy between public and private partly fulfils the individual's need for a place in the world?

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[103] Lefebvre (1997, p.146) in the *Production of Space*, presents some of his ideas concerning early modernism and the supremacy of the visual realm in space. Modernists resented the previous appearance, elaboration and decorum and instead they pursue the weightless and transparent, and the inside-outside connectedness, registering space as iconological with an allure of individualism and a rather dogmatic aesthetisation. Lefebvre thinks that the users don't just sit and watch this development; they still look for the inside-outside distinction as the public-private reassurance is vital for humans. So they resort to the idea of property. Property is also something that Don Mitchell uses to explain the public/private division. A 'visualisation' of Lefebvre's idea of a modernist's materialisation of space is a modernist house, transparent and fluid, connecting the inside with the outside, and then surrounded with walls and obstacles(visual mostly). Lefebvre essentialises rather than challenges the norms of private and public.

[104] About the role of *home* in women's position in the welfare society:
"The development of the welfare state has presupposed that certain aspects of welfare could and should continue to be provided by women (wives) in the home, and not primarily through public provision. The 'work' of a housewife can include the care of an invalid husband and elderly, perhaps infirm, relatives. Welfare-state policies have ensured in various ways that wives/women provide welfare services gratis, disguised as part of their responsibility for the private sphere. A good deal has been written about the fiscal crisis of the welfare state, but it would have been more acute if certain areas of welfare had not been seen as a private, women's matter." (Pateman 2000, p.248)

[105] See Urwin, Tim. (2000). A Waste of Space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space... *Transcripts of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol. 25(2000), pp. 11-29.

2.8 PRIVATE & PUBLIC BODIES

Richard Sennett (2002) in his *Flesh and Stone* presents a 'journey' through cities shaped by the experience of our own bodies. Sennett gives an abundance of information about city life from the Ancient Greek *polis* to modern multi-cultural New York, while he keeps the focus on the experience of the human body. He doesn't concentrate on issues of private and public per se, however such issues are unavoidable. The festivals of Thesmophoria and Adonia suggest that women's position in the Greek *polis* was more multifaceted than a clear-cut ban from public life. Athenian citizens acknowledged that women should have the possibility to appropriate the public sphere of the city even temporarily, and thereafter male dominance was gratified.[106] Women in ancient Athens proceeded with their festivities in a way that was more overwhelming than the way men celebrated in *symposion*. The latter was a private and exclusive celebration where the citizens could relax from their public representation, and it was decisively located at the *andron* (the chamber for men) of the home. Women's Adonia, on the other hand took place at night, in the dark streets and on the rooftops of houses, away from the domestic interior as such and decisively hovering over the city (Sennett 2002, p. 70-78). While women were admittedly excluded from the public sphere, there were instances demonstrating the opposite. Public baths in Roman times were mixed, until Hadrian segregated the bathing times for men and women.[107] Bathing in public and body exposure were accepted as forming a civic body. Since early Christianity bathing took on a more personal, religious and individual significance, especially with baptism.

Helsinki, 2003. Homeless in Eerikinkatu.

Athens, 2003. Homeless in Omonia Square.

106 "The classicist John Winkler, in a memorable phrase, calls the Adonia the 'laughter of the oppressed.' But this ritual did not say no to the male yes. It did not prompt women to commandeer the agora, the Pnyx, or other male bastions for a night. The roof was not a launching pad for rebellion. Instead, it was a space in which women momentarily and bodily stepped out of the conditions imposed on them by the dominant order of the city. The Adonia could have easily been suppressed by husbands or the guardians of the polis, yet no civic power sought to prevent women from observing it, […]. These two ancient festivals illustrate a simple social truth: Ritual heals." (Sennett 2002, p.80)

107 "By Hadrian's time, Rome was filled with public and private bathing establishments; the baths were great domed structures, covering pools and exercise halls. Institutions in which all Romans met, usually in groups, the baths, unlike the Greek gymnasia, accommodated women as well as men, old as well as young. Until Hadrian's era, men and women bathed at the same time; he was the first to segregate the sexes, the women bathing before men. [The rich also would from time to time leave their private baths and join the public ones, even the emperor Hadrian joined his subjects at public baths.]The poor lingered inside the public baths, finding there a refuge from the squalor of their own homes until the buildings closed at sunset. […] baths more generally released people from the harshness of the life outside […]." (Sennett 2002, p. 139)

> "As practiced in the early Christian house, someone who felt ready for baptism undressed completely then plunged into a tub of water in a room or space separated from the ritual feast. Upon emerging from the pool, the celebrant put on entirely new clothes to signify that he or she was now a changed person. 'The bath {became} a permanent threshold between the 'clean' group and 'dirty' world.'"
> (Sennett 2002, p. 140)

These symbolisms are quite apparent in current Christian practices, where the ritual of baptism has endured to signify the entrance of the celebrant into the Christian community. In addition, Sennett presents the example of the Jewish ghettos in medieval Venice and shows the way in which private practices concerning the body and cleanliness were used as a weapon to publicly persecute a minority.[108] The concept of cleanliness changed radically from Roman times to medieval times and through the Enlightenment, and it altered the dividing line between private and public affairs. Impurity meant dirty skin rather than a stain on the soul.

> "Skin became impure due to people's social experience rather than as a result of moral failure. […]. More, for the skin to breathe, people had to wash more frequently than they had before. The Roman's daily bath had disappeared by medieval times; bathing was considered by some medieval doctors to be, in fact, dangerous, since it radically unbalanced the temperature of the body. Now people who dressed lightly and bathed often […]. " (Sennett 2002, p.262-3)

The concept of purity acquired public significance, therefore individual's pursuit of purity of soul evolved into a quest for the cleanliness of skin from dirt, as well as from social touching. Sennett explains through his narrative on the urban-body evolution how the dividing lines between the conditions of private and public shifted constantly as the imperatives of each period were managed by the authoritative elites. It is in this sense important to understand how for example concepts like privacy have altered radically through human history and in various ways.[109] According to Sennett, rituals have been an important medium through which urban conditions have been altered, as much as *human conditions*, to refer to Arendt. Rituals have contributed to human development by shaping beliefs and educating people, while normalising dissent (like pagan and semi-pagan festivities and carnivals)

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[108] "The study of religious prejudice is not an exercise of rationality. The desire for purity, the anthropologist Mary Douglas has written, expresses a society's fears; in particular, the self-loathing a group may feel can 'migrate' to become attached to a group which represents the impure. Such a migration occurred in Venice after Agnadello. The Venetians believed they were threatened by sensual decline, and displaced their self-loathing onto the Jews." (Sennett 2002, p. 225)

[109] "Parisians used the gardens of Notre-Dame instead as a place to relieve the sheer pressure of population in the city's houses and streets. Within the house, as on the street, people lived packed tightly together. The rooms of urban houses functioned like streets, people coming and going at will at all hours […] The medieval Parisian did not know the notion of a private room reserved for an individual." (Sennett 2002, p.179)

and its suppression. The power of rituals is demonstrated by Sennett with the case of post-revolutionary Paris. On the 10th of August, 1793, at the Festival of the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic, the politicians gathered the crowds at the Fountain of Regeneration with the statue of Marianne and her water-spouting breasts. Everyone was supposed to be able to drink from that fountain, but of course this wasn't the case. The festivities soon required that people would behave in a military fashion so that order would prevail.

> "When modern society began to treat unobstructed movement as freedom, it fell into a quandary about what to do with the desires represented by Marianne's body; these are fraternal desires for connection to other people, a social rather than merely sexual touch. […] The script [during the festivities] thus called for a movement from female to male, from the domestic to the military, from the sociable to the obedient." (Sennett 2002, p.312)

Oslo, 2005. Skateboarding tricks at the town-hall square.

Oslo, 2005. Public performance.

Beijing, 2005. Latin dances.

The Interconnecting Power of Rituals

Rituals are used to normalise in general, as well as to normalise change. Those in the positions to affect the forms and underlying meanings of rituals can do so; however, this doesn't mean that the rituals will not be unpredictably appropriated. The ritualisation of the public sphere and the discourse against its extinction may play a considerable role in an urban democracy.

> "The distinction between logos and mythos teaches a harsh lesson. The words for which people claim responsibility create mutual distrust and suspicions that need to be deflected and manipulated. This harsh truth shed a terrifying light on Kleisthenes' belief that people should be free to speak and responsible for what they say. Democracy deals in the politics of mutual mistrust. The words for which the speakers seem not responsible [as in telling a myth] create a bond of trust; trust is forged by people only under the sway of myth, under the sway of language external to the speakers themselves, as in the paeans in homage to Demeter spoken in the huts on the Pnyx and to Adonis on the roofs of the Athenian house. […] The spaces of rituals created magic zones of mutual affirmation." (Sennett 2002, p. 81-2)

It is important that counterpublics create and enact their urban rituals in a common affirmation of each other. In doing so, we all negotiate continually what is personal, private, intimate, or public and common, for the rest to recognise and challenge. The French republic needed boulevards to control freedom of movement. The Adonia would probably not be tolerated nowadays. If we can do better than the ethnic food festivals organised to celebrate our multicultural cities, then we may allow the 'Other' to develop and enact upon rituals that would call for negotiative affirmation. This process is as important for the public sphere of a multicultural democratic city as it is for the private sphere. In the end, it is important for human life among diverse people.[110] Despite the fact that Sennett doesn't think of rituals as adequate means "to turn human beings outward" (Sennett 2002, p.374), still rituals of the everyday, are important in enriching our lives. Sennett shows that rituals are prescribed in spaces as well as in stories that express our worlds and the way we experience our worlds.

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[110] "In this course of the development of modern, urban individualism, the individual fell silent in the city. The street, the café, the department store, the railroad, bus, and underground became places of the gaze rather than scenes of discourse. When verbal connections between strangers in the modern city are difficult to sustain, the impulses of sympathy which individuals may feel in the city looking at the scene around them become in turn momentary-a second of response looking at snapshots of life. Diversity in the Village works this way; ours is a purely visual agora. There is nowhere to discuss the stimulations of the eye on streets like Second Avenue, no place they can be collectively shaped into a civic narrative, nor perhaps more consequently, a sanctuary which takes account of for the disease-ravaged scenes of the East Village."
(Sennett 2002, p. 358)

New York, 2005.

New York, 2005. Liberty Square, Manhattan.

The Interconnecting Power of Pain

Sennett (2002) presents a theory according to which *pain* can turn people outwards, and towards one another in a multicultural city like his New York. To accept pain is decisive as a precondition for feeling compassion towards others. From the *teatrum mundi* of Roman times until modern days, pain has been exorcised, exiled, feared and emptied. Sennett doesn't want to bring pain into the epicentre of human life, but rather that the acceptance of private suffering and its public expression become elements to interconnect people. The voices of difference, of those who haven't been trained to speak, of those who have been discriminated, who have been traumatised and then silenced, these voices of pain have to find a place to be heard and shared.

> "Lurking in the civic problems of a multi-cultural city is the moral difficulty of arousing sympathy for those who are Other. And this can occur, I believe, by understanding why bodily pain requires a place in which it can be acknowledged, and in which its transcendent origins become visible. Such pain has a trajectory in human experience. It disorients and makes incomplete the self, defeats the desire for coherence; the body accepting pain is ready to become a civic body, sensible to the pain of another person, pains present together on the street, at last endurable-even though, in a diverse world, each person cannot explain what he or she is feeling, who is he or she, to the other." (Sennett 2002, p. 376)

Sennett is vague in giving tangible alternatives. However, his concept of pain is a decisive condition distinguishing private and public spheres. The place proper for physical and emotional pain has been more and more the private sphere; from home to institutions like hospitals and prisons, suffering was meant to be out of the public light. While Romans had people eaten by bears in the *teatrum mundi*, and French revolutionaries had the guillotine, we have television. It is often argued that the more pain we see on screen the less sensitised we become. Accepting our pain or suffering and allowing its visibility, we also accept to deal with the sufferings of others; especially of people who had been in one way or another muted, and those who are more foreign to us. In this way personal and private pain become shared and public, related to the species with which we share this world we live in. It is possible that pain and its privatisation has been a principle for the dichotomy between public and private; from giving birth, to emotional distress, to domestic and racist violence, we may need to break the equation between pain and the humiliation of weakness. Suffering is an attribute of poverty, unjust treatment and inequality; and it is this suffering that statistics and official reports tend to disregard as too emotional.

Prologue for Parts Three & Four

"The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people live together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be. 'Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*': these famous words became not merely the watchword of Greek colonization, they expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly. This space does not always exist, and although all men are capable of deed and word, most of them-like the slave, the foreigner, and the barbarian in antiquity, like the laborer or craftsman prior to the modern age, the jobholder of businessman in our world-do not live in it. No man, moreover, can live in it all the time. To be deprived of it means to be deprived of reality, which, humanly and politically speaking, is the same as appearance. To men the reality of the world is guaranteed by the presence of others, by its appearing to all; […] The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized. […] Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever. (Arendt 1998 [1958], p.198)

In the following parts we will see people of different races, nationalities and religions, and consider the survival strategies they employ to find freedom to express their identities, what I call their *public faces*. In the past more than nowadays, the places of 'public assembly' and of encountering the other were the loci of public life, places of good or bad, just or unjust politics.[111] For, since the small scale ancient Greek *polis*, it is apparent that politics often suffer from the intrusion of individual interests, when the common good retreats under the private advancement.

About "the politics and public life of later fifth-century Athens, a city with very democratic institutions" Adkins (1972) writes:

"It is undeniable […] that Athenian direct democracy, which gave a vote to every citizen which he could exercise in person in the Assembly, put power to decide

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[111] See Adkins (1972); Arendt (1998) [1958]; Bell (2004); Cohen (2000); Habermas (2003) [1962].

between politics laid before them in the hands of the common people of Athens to a quite unusual extent. But we sometimes tacitly assume that, because any citizen might in theory also address the Assembly, policy-making was widely spread through the citizen body. I can see little to suggest this, and much to suggest the contrary. The violence of the attacks directed at 'Cleon the tanner' readily gives a picture of an artisan snatching time from his labours to engage in politics; whereas in fact he seems to have been the son of a rich tanner, endowed with abundant leisure and the external advantages of the *agathos*-but not a member of the old political families, the old aristocracy, as were Pericles and earlier politicians. In the eyes of the common people, and in his own eyes, Cleon must have been an *agathos*; but if a Cleon, with a real bases for self-confidence in terms of much of Greek values, faced such opposition and vituperation from the established political classes and the *agathoi* authors who have come down to us, one who had not such advantages was very unlikely to open his mouth." (Adkins 1972, p.140) [112]

Public space, from the Athenian Democracy until nowadays, seems to have always been the ground of power struggles amongst people with different rights to public representation. These rights have been increasingly delineated since antiquity; however in societies that increasingly recognise themselves as pluralistic, rights to public expression are further legitimised and increasingly debatable.[113] The common good as a subject of constant negotiation thereby loses its virtue of universality; the law obliges but still injustices occur. Public debate is as important as ever. Public stands not only for encountering the stranger; it also means that the participation in a negotiation for the fulfilment of rights and desires within society, a negotiation that translates into politics and social struggles. Arendt (1958) describes the polis as the domain of such participation. Fraser (1992, p.117) makes a distinction concerning the public sphere which materialises under State authoritarianism as a ground for "the construction of the consent that defines the new hegemonic mode of domination." At the same time,

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112 Adkins, A.W.H. (1972). Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece. From Homer to the end of the Fifth Century. London: Chatto & Windus.
For *Agathos* in ancient Greece [in modern Greek meaning genuinely good-hearted and also a bit naïve, too pure and unspoiled] Adkins writes: "To be *agathos* is to be a good specimen of human being, to be a human being at his best; to be a *kakos* is to be the reverse." (Adkins 1972, p.65)

113 I counterpose here the work of David Cohen (1991). According to his perspective, the Athenian polis, radical democracy, and the role of law over the boundaries between private and public, revolved around politics of reputation.
"Thus the role of law, according to the Athenian conception of radical democracy, is not to enforce an *intrusive* order regulating all aspects of life, but rather to provide a *delimiting* order which defines the boundaries beyond which

the state or private individuals (hubris, calumny, assault, theft) may not enter one's private domain (house, sexuality, family, friendship, property, livelihood, etc.). The democratic polis, then, does not attempt to root out immorality, but rather to keep its harmful effects out of the public sphere." (Cohen 1991, p.230-231)
"[...] understanding the way in which legal, social, and moral categories were manipulated so as to influence the normative judgments of the community according to the standards of the politics of reputation. It is such inquiries, I believe, which can help us recover the normative order of Athenian views of ideology, values, and practices, as they were understood by those whose lives were given shape by these structures, and who in turn reproduced and reshaped them through their action." (Cohen 1991, 240)

people who society by consent renders as second class citizens can still find a voice within such public spheres. Fraser (1992) points to the agonistic and contested nature inherent in the public sphere, and this correlates with her theory of the subaltern counterpublics and the multiplicity of publics. In diverse societies, when the legal framework permits, people's rights to the city and public representation are nuanced and open to various interpretations, despite top-down attempts to universalise these rights. To my understanding, this multidimensionality of the public domain has led to despair, registering as futile a research that investigates complex urban phenomena through only one disciplinary lens. This discourse is also a part of, and responds to, this despair.

Public spaces are places for all. In practice, however, some people are included and some others are excluded, making public spaces biased towards many groups of people in our cities; some of these groups constitute the 'Other.' These groups are not homogenous; in fact they are homogenous mainly in their internal diversity. I use the term urbanites and stake holders as notions broader than those of city-inhabitants or dwellers, users, or consumers.[114] Urbanites and stake holders stand for the fleeting physiognomy of those who *participate* in the multitude of everyday life experiences of urban spaces.[115] I refer to an extended and more loosely defined citizenship.

Citizenship is often perceived as fixed. Fraser (2002) suggests differently. Her ideas on nationality, as opposed to citizenship and the 'community of faith,' underlie a great part of our discussion on identities and public space, as migrants are a representative component in my concept of urbanites seen through *diaspora* and *transnationalism.* The concept transnational can be understood as a new social field of growing populations living between two or more cultures, languages and countries.[116] Agustin (2003) interprets the transnational as a way of re-editing agency as a fundamental quality of migrants. She maintains that 'migrant' concerns a stage of life of people and the use of the term often excludes a large part of the process these people are going through, such as social integration, assimilation, loosing identity, identification, etc. Nagar & Leitner, while researching diasporas have a similar approach.

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114 "If the environment prompts people 'to think of the public domain as meaningless,' as Sennett has suggested, it is partly because the built environment is designed to represent its own functionality. Individuals are defined as 'users,' and addressed primarily as a crowd on their way elsewhere, perhaps facilitated in their passage but inhibited in their ability to recognize any commonality of their connection to the space, and induced to think of it purely in relation to their individual interests and goals." (Brain 1997, p. 244-5)

115 Max Weber gives another perspective with the ancient concept of an urbanite.
"While today we justly regard the typical 'urbanite' as a man who does not supply his own food need on his own land, originally the contrary was the case for the majority of

typical ancient cities. In contrast to the medieval situation, the ancient urbanite was quite legitimately characterized by the fact that a *kleros, fundus* (In Israel: *chelek*) which he called his own, was a parcel of land which fed him. The full urbanite of antiquity was a semi-peasant." (Weber 1966, p. 71)

116 To my understanding diasporic space and diaspora involve fractural and overlapping cultures, identities, economies and ideologies. Describing his *ethnoscapes* Appadurai (1993) elaborates on conditions that are decidedly diasporic. "[...] the central paradox of ethnic politics in today's world is that primordia (whether of language or skin color or neighbourhood or kinship) have become globalized. That is, sentiments whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political sentiment

"Dominant rules of exclusion and inclusion are subject to change as a result of altered contextual realities and social agency. […] At the same time, individuals and communities have to be seen as active social agents in constructing their identities through the life experiences and discourses into which they are inserted and the socio-political practices they engage in." (Nagar & Leitner 1998, p.229)

Maybe this is a way out of the mostly unconscious victimisation of migrants by people like me (an avid migrant myself), speaking on behalf of migrants. I realize that in our effort to make sense of the world around us, we often tend to generalize in order to conceptualise. This reduction has a homogenizing and neutralizing effect, which I believe should be questioned. A central point for my research is the idea of urban neutrality as conceived by some of the stakeholders of public space. City experts, planners and designers, due to their fear of differences among urbanites as a cause for conflicts (even violent ones), plan with hardly any understanding as to how these confrontations could be expressed creatively and constructively in the urban public realm;

"You build neutrality in order to legitimise withdrawal." (Sennett 1991, p.65)

Urban neutrality refers to any 'spineless' attempt to compromise city space and create idyllic landscapes of peaceful consumerism, unhindered by the challenges of living together with strangers.[117] Is the city predominantly a market facility?
In Athens, because of the 2004 Olympic Games, massive development projects were decided and some realized. The urban conditions of the city of Athens have altered significantly. Urban policies and planning that doesn't involve people may create clashes and may discriminate against certain people, especially those with limited access to power.

It is Nordic societies that we people of the South often look up to. In these, communities have been guaranteed as such by oaths, pacts, charters and reciprocal good faith.[118] In the North, contractual forms of alliances tend to be more restrictive, disembodied and

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and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces as groups move, yet stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities. This is not to deny such primordia […] but to emphasize that because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national policies and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large), has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders." (Appadurai 1993, p. 285)
On October 27th, 2004, an African men rather well dressed and articulate, though slightly inroxicated by alcohol, approached me at a metro station in Helsinki. He expressed his frustrations at being in diasporic space in Helsinki. He

said that after twelve years in Finland he still feels frustrated. "You know the best thing is to marry and make many children, otherwise you become like me, studying, nothing... but I am good at mathematics..." I asked him if it is so bad. Very seriously he said: "It is not good."

117 Urban neutrality is not seen negatively, especially by the bourgeoisie, since it camouflages the power struggles shaping space, and creates policed, conflict-suppressed environments of 'civility.' Zukin's (1995) 'pacification by cappuccino' is a strategy among others promoting urban neutrality.

118 Weber (1966)[1958], presenting a diachronic evolution of the City from antiquity to the Middle Ages, shows

abstract. In Southern Europe social relations tend to be based more on unspoken as well as on explicit alliances such as families, clans, mafias, and clientalism (Lefebvre & Régulier1996, p. 233-234). This aspiration of the South towards the North has entered the sphere of common sense. And it is often argued that the liberal welfare states of southern European countries have a lot to learn from the welfare states of the North. In Greece, despite of the birth of ancient civilisations, there is the underlying common belief that the 1453-1821 Ottoman occupation undermined all possibilities for considerable progress. This backwardness registered social institutions, in what was later to be the Greek State, as primitive. Emile Durkheim, in his pioneering work on *The Division of Labour in Society*, describes the contractual character of such a division in contrast to clan affiliations in industrialised European cities throughout history.[119] Contracts as binding lawful agreements among different parties appeared in Roman times. The earlier Athenian Polis, although similar to the Roman city in its organisation, is characterised by Durkheim as more primitive; largely because "the politico-family type of organisation has disappeared from it much more slowly" (Durkheim 1988, p.135). In addition, traditionalism in ancient Athens and Greece often hindered innovation (Durkheim 1988, p.238).[120] Not claiming that the shortcomings of modern Greek society stem from an ancestral genetic code, I want here to provide a preliminary theoretical platform.

> "There is a consensus of a certain kind that is expressed in contracts and that, in higher species, represents an important factor in the general consensus. Thus it is necessary in higher societies for contractual solidarity it cannot to be shielded so far as possible from anything that might disturb it. For if, in less advanced societies, it can remain unstable without much difficulty arising, for the reasons we have stated, in a position where it is one of the pre-eminent forms of social solidarity it cannot come under threat without the unity of the body social being threatened at the same time." (Durkheim 1988, p.316)

An epistemological cliché or not, this division between primitive and advanced societies based on contractual rather than ritualistic means is meaningful and worth considering in the context of the schematic North-South polarisation.[121] It is in the light of the above distinction that I unfold a parallelism of the Finnish Information Society and the Greek hybrid or liberal

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that processes of related forms of association were engendered in the formations of cities everywhere. However, although Weber describes the antique Mediterranean cities as pioneering regarding their organisation, when discussing the medieval cities in Europe he deals extensively with the guild organisations of central and northern European cities.

119 Durkheim, E. (1988)[1893]. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated from French by W.D. Halls. Hampshire, New York: Palgrave.

120 "[...] it is not that the Greeks have abandoned traditional values to which they might be recalled by moral suasion or rhetoric, but that they retained their traditional values in a situation far different from that in which the values had developed and to which they were appropriate." (Adkins 1972, p.146-7)

121 Durkheim's perspective on higher suicide rates in the advanced societies is a macabre indicator of civilisation. "[...] the true suicide, the suicide of sadness, is an endemic state among civilised people. It is even geo-

welfare state. In the first, interpreting Durkheim, the division of labour was more advanced, and accordingly so was the independence of the individual from group affiliations;

> "[…] independence appears later and progresses steadily with the division of labour, as a sequel to the regression of the collective consciousness." (Durkheim 1988, p.229)

Finally, it is interesting, in the context of the prevailing Christian Orthodox norms in modern Greek society, that Durkheim (1984, p.228) links societal traditionalism and the reluctance for innovation and "free investigation" to religion. Durkheim provides a lens through which I resonate with the differences between Greece and Finland and further contextualise my discourse on city space, public spheres and spaces.

Even if more in the South than in the North public spaces take on a life of their own, through urbanites' actions, social relations based on group affiliations, and through time, it remains a common truth that regardless if one is in the North or the South, some public spaces become our favourites, some we associate ourselves with. This creating of spatial history is affected as much by societal norms, written and unwritten laws, urban policies, commercialisation and profiteering, as by people's appropriations. Helsinki Railway Station and Omonia Square in Athens are my case studies.

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graphically distributed according to the level of civilisation. On the maps of suicide it can be seen that the central region of Europe is occupied by a huge patch which extends between the 47th and 57th degree of latitude and between the 20thand 40th degree of longitude. [...] Within each country the same kind of relationship is to be seen. Everywhere suicide is more prevalent in town than in the countryside. Civilisation is concentrated in the large towns, as is suicide." (Durkheim 1988, p.191)

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PART THREE
OMONIA SQUARE

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Omonia Square in Athens is a case study for this research in regard to socio-spatial discrimination against a certain 'Other' of Greek society: Albanian immigrants. The case of Omonia is characteristic of the southern European *liberal* and *hybrid* welfare state.[122] The ambiguous immigration politics are intertwined with histories of expressed xenophobia during various urbanisations in Athens. These politics have created a legacy that is disadvantageous for a *multicultural* Athens. The milieu in Athens is xenophobic, although there are voices of concern about a nation whose majority is uneasy with its foreign residents.[123] Xenophobia can

Omonia Square. Athens, 1895. Courtesy of Mpenaki Museum Athens.

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[122] See Allen 1998; Gallie 1999; Lehto 2000.

[123] The spring 2000 Eurobarometer Survey showed that 38% of Greeks are disturbed by the presence of foreigners in Greece (the highest rate in EU countries). Also a spring 1999 survey carried out by the state National Centre for Social Research showed that the parents and the teachers of 47%-54% of junior high and senior high school pupils were xenophobic (IHF Report 2001).

bring discrimination into the foreground, interchangeably. Diversity politics are a long way from the official policies and the reality of Athens; all inextricably related with the design and management aspirations for urban public space. The area of Omonia Square will work as a kind of stereoscopic illustration of a contested Greek-style urbanism, and as the setting for the spatialisation of the conflict of interests between various stake holders: the state and municipality, marginalised groups like drug users, the police, and Albanian stake holders. For this discussion I refer to some Greek as well as international scholars; the first provide an insight into socio-spatial discrimination related to immigrants within the Greek context, while the latter shed light on diversity politics and their socio-spatial interpretation.

The parallelism between the case of Athens and the Greek welfare state and a few cases within the context of north-western welfare states doesn't have a comparative ambition, as it would be like comparing apples with oranges. The literature used for the sake of this discussion exemplifies a big difference between the Greek context of struggling to *define* diversity and its importance, and for instance the North American context of dealing with issues of *redefining* diversity politics and radical urbanism.[124] However, if I am not comparing these cases then what is the purpose of the attempted parallelism? In the conceptual distance, even incompatibility, of the cases used as the basis to discuss Omonia Square, I see the potential of a challenging and creative way to elaborate on issues of hope and despair. Such an issue is living "together-in-difference."[125]

The following discussion is hopeful. It deals with socio-spatial deadlocks within the Athenian reality through the *conceptual trapeze* of diversity politics and rights to the city. This discussion may at times seem to be unfair to Greek history and philosophy and their role in the advancement of western thought. However, because of the scholarly work of Arendt (1998) [1958], Sennett (2002) [1994] and Cohen (1995, 2000) on the Greek *polis*, as well as the illuminating myth of Aeschylus' Oresteia on "the evolution of justice in human society from blood vengeance to the rule of law,"[126] I feel released of the pressure to praise Greek heritage. Therefore, I will unfold a critical discussion over Omonia and Greek urban politics.

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[124] In addition I will refer to Richa Nagar and Helga Leitner's (1998) case of Dar es Salaam, and the kind of diversity politics involved in the postcolonial power struggles between Tanzanians and Asians; the latter being the legacy of the colonial times of the British Empire.

[125] Iris Marion Young (2000), cited in Loretta Lees (2003, p.631).

[126] Burian, P. & Shapiro A. (eds.) (2003). *Aeschylus. The Oresteia*. Oxford: University Press, pp. 5.

3.2 DIVERSITY & URBAN SPACE

> "Like motherhood and apple pie, diversity is difficult to disagree with, Janus-like, it promises different things to different people. […]The discursive power of 'diversity' lay in its imperative elasticity." (Lees 2003, p.622)

In her article on the ambivalence of diversity and the politics of urban renaissance, the geographer Loretta Lees (2003) concentrates on diversity politics and how they are incorporated, as well as challenged, by urban planning and policy making in the city. She draws her material from the United States. My interest in Lees' work is that it deals with much of my anxiety and doubts about diversity theorised, and diversity lived.

Throughout my research, I have been struggling with the idea of public space as the space of encountering the 'Other,' challenging our prejudice, and expanding our social perception of the world around us and of our place in it. I grew to believe that a well functioning public space is based on, and inspires, a multileveled negotiation between people with similar and different interests; in short, it allows discussions to open up and conflicts to manifest.[127] This whole scheme, considering also the possibility of fragmentation as Frazer (1992) has shown with her *subaltern counterpublics*, builds upon an acceptance of diversity. As I have been participating in the discourse on diversity, I am increasingly convinced of the necessity to disseminate such discourses, and anxious about their practical input. Lees provides a fertile ground for me to negotiate ideas of diversity (or diversities) and the urban, especially in regard to the Greek context.

Lees shows that the experts/stake holders of urban regeneration, such as architects, planners, property developers, and I would add politicians and policy makers, have been exploring the possibilities of facilitating cultural, economic, functional and spatial diversity for the benefit of city life. Others are investigating the conflicts arising from different conceptions and interpretations of diversity (Lees 2003, p. 613).

Heterogeneity

> "The rhetoric of urban renaissance yearns for heterogeneity, but in practice harmony and stability are often emphasized over other forms of urban experience. Nevertheless, the diversity of diversities is not just a mask for particular interests. Its ambiva-

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[127] See also Aeschylus (2003); Arendt (1998); Davis (1990, 2000); Fraser (1992, 2002); Lefebvre (1997, 2003); Madanipour (1996, 1998); Mitchell (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005b); Ruddick (1996); Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003); Sennett (1991, 2002, 2003); Young (1990, 2000).

lence and interpretative flexibility provide space for imagining other possibilities for diversity downtown. People in Portland have appealed to both liberal and communitarian ideals to articulate different visions of downtown space and the place of youth in it. Achieving these possibilities requires more than just a celebration of diversity. It also requires a commitment to broader concepts of toleration and justice." (Lees 2003, p.630-1)

Accepting heterogeneity as a guiding principle, or precondition even, for policy making that facilitates the richness of urban life to unfold, seems crucial in Lees' discussion. Concerning Omonia Square, accepting heterogeneity for its potential affordance must overcome a considerable resistance from the authorities. It is not any easy task for the state, the market economy, the policy makers, or the architects, planners and designers to endorse diversity, especially when the agenda of diversity as such is under conception. It is fruitful to involve at this point the voice of David Harvey. Relying on Young's ideas, Harvey (1992) builds an account of diversity, social justice and their implication in policy making and planning.

"The heterogeneity of open democracy, the mixing of classes, ethnicities, religions and divergent taste cultures within a common frame of public space is lost along with the capacity to celebrate unity and community in the midst of diversity.[…] Even the best shaped compromise (let alone the savagely imposed authoritarian

New Jersey, 2005. Jersey City, a synagogue turned into a mosque.

solution) favours one or the other factional interest. And that provokes the biggest question of all - what is the conception of 'the public' incorporated into the construction of public space?" (Harvey 1992, p. 591)

Harvey seems to doubt the concepts of diversity within a bourgeois (postmodern, too, if you wish) discussion, and their aesthetic spatial interpretations in today's multicultural cities. The 'melting pot' and the 'salad bawl' are not indicative of multicultural politics of difference, but rather of liberal homogenising consensus.[128] Harvey writes characteristically:

"[…] in what ways for example, can homeless be understood as spontaneous self-diversification, and does this mean that we should respond to that problem with designer-style cardboard boxes to make for more jolly and sightly shelters for the homeless?" (Harvey 1992, p.590)

I argue that indeed heterogeneity and diversity are concepts that, endorsed by the policy makers and the state, would be a great step in recognising the complexity inherent in the city. Despite the promising potentials of such endorsement, the question should remain about what kind of diversity we are considering, and what kind of change we anticipate in doing so. If the Greek state would ever endorse multifaceted diversity in an open and democratic discourse on urban space, there should be criteria to be considered as to the anticipated outcomes of such a project.

3.3 ATHENS - URBANISATION, IMMIGRANTS, AND DISASTERS

The question is if the city of Athens provides a platform for people of certain nationalities cultures, and/or religions to express their identities as part of their everyday negotiation with the 'Other.' The urban history of Athens has been shaped by three important historical events, at the beginning, the middle and the end of the 20th century. In 1922, 246,000 refugees of Greek origin arrived from Asia Minor and settled in Athens. Secondly, after the WW II, and in the years immediately after the Greek civil war, there was a large national migration influx towards Athens. Finally, the most recent urbanisation of Athens came with the Albanian influx in the early 90s (Orfanou 2001, p.5).The principles of the urban development of that era still remain evident today. The urgent need for housing created a situation where, as Koubis describes:

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128 For their reflective analysis on diversity and Canadian institutionalised multiculturalism see also Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005).

Athens, 2002. Metaksurgio area.

"Transgressing housing laws in order to acquire a roof over one's head is equal to a strong or weak appropriation of public space." (Koubis 2002, p.77)

This situation may very well describe the largest part of Athens' urbanisation and para-urbanisation with the discrete assistance of the state (Philippides 2002, p.155-160). It is in the '90s that Greece and Athens were included in the migration map; this signified that for the first time in its history the country and its capital were receiving fiscal immigrants and refugees coming from neighbouring and far away countries.[129] The 'foreigners' dispersed in the city, but still they concentrated around and in the centre where it was and is easier to find jobs and dwellings. In 1993, 500,000 Albanians, fleeing the economic uncertainty in their country, arrived in Athens. They were seeking a better life and the social shock that followed was a great one for Athens (Theodorou 2002, p.28). It is no surprise that the majority of the Greek population was caught unprepared, and with the stirring sensationalism of the mass media fear and anger became an easy outlet for the Greeks' frustration.

"Again, Athens became foreign to its inhabitants (in the city centre, at least) and the phenomenon of the Fear of the City once more manifested itself." (Moutsopoulos 2002, p.89)

This process hasn't been novel, as it had occurred in previous urbanisations in Greek history, and this may tell us plenty of the Greek supremacist politics. Despite everything, immigrants are unquestionable stake holders in the life of Greek urban centres.

"[…] immigrants no longer go unnoticed in Athens." (Stavridis 2002, p.139)

Immigrants and refugees long for the countries, families and homes they have left behind.[130] In Athens they create their own hang-outs, restaurants and coffee-shops. They have their own routes, public squares, parks and playgrounds – places they know better than the natives. Still, some lead a clandestine life and are watchful of the prying eye of the locals. They take advantage of all and old ingenious adaptations of the disenfranchised.[131] In Athens, as in many European capitals of the South, many of the spaces where transnation-

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[129] See Kasimati (2003).

[130] In Nitsiakos' (2003) Testimonies of Albanian Immigrants, there are thirteen interviews in which we read about the conditions in Albania that motivated many to enter Greece and look for a better life. We read about Albanian immigrants' aspirations, failures, compromises, struggles and drive to live and provide for their extended families, in Greece and Albania.

[131] A film depicting Athens in August through the sad

story of a young immigrant bandit is "One day in August" by Constantinos Giannaris.
Athens in August is a ghost city because of the summer vacation. Those who have the means to leave, do so en masse, while mostly lower income transnational migrants are left behind. The fear of burglaries leads the natives to use the latest security systems for surprise-free vacations. Little do most of them imagine that, while away, their city temporarily changes its public face. Immigrants appropriate public space, they recreate the lost centres of their lives,

als live, work, use and appropriate could be perceived as "excluded places" (Kopomaa 1990, p.76-7); these places are not concentrated in the periphery of the city. The centre of Athens, which holds the administrative and commercial pulse of the capital, with its historic triangle and three important squares, is the living space of thousands of immigrants.

Para-Urbanism

Like all states, Greece has introduced much overlapping legislation, general building regulations, real-estate registries and maps, land use regulations and many other special regulations on every single detail concerning urban and architectural planning and construction. Many civil servants and others play a decisive role concerning any construction in the urban environment.[132] There is an old belief that Greek cities are by-products of Greek politics, and of people's strategies to tackle scarcity of resources and land in bad times. The urbanisation of Greece in the 20th century resulted from one disaster or another.[133] Soon after the first urbanisation in Greece, "para-urbanism" was born.

According to Philippides (2002, p.155) *para-urbanism* is a branch of urban planning that functions side by side with the official urban planning. Para-urbanism mediates between the state and the citizens. Through para-urbanism citizens negotiate the grey-zone between legality and illegality, due to the fluidity of regulations and laws, and the ambiguity of official decisions. The complexity of laws and regulations determines the undisturbed function of para-urbanism. The state further complicates the legal framework in order to fight back against this phenomenon. Actually, the state works with or uses para-urbanism in many cases and, according to the identity and status of the trespasser; it resorts to the by now old strategic policy of land use. Land uses categorise areas into those for which there is a plan and those for which the City Planning board has made no official plan; the actual borders between the two categories are decisive since the land prices and speculative possibilities depend on this categorisation. The borders are by no means rigid; in fact they are negotiable and ever expanding

they make the new city more hospitable for them. It is unfortunate that most experts, scholars and policy makers don't witness this social transformation of public spaces of the city. Young immigrant children are seen again playing in the streets of certain neighbourhoods, grown-ups sit and play cards on the sparse lawn of municipal parks, young men and women stroll up and down open-air hangouts, recreating the all too familiar "monkey-parade" of the Greek countryside (Stavridis 2002, p.140).

[132] Lawyers, notaries, civil servants from planning offices, municipalities or smaller counties, the ministry of Environment, Urban Planning and Public works, the ministry of Tourism, architects, engineers, the National Company for Electric Energy, the Public Company for Water supply and sewerage, and so on and so forth.

[133] "There were times when I thought Athens was a denial of Greece, literally a paving over of this blood memory, the faces gazing out of stony landscapes. As the city grew it would consume the bitter history around it until nothing was left but grey streets, the six-story buildings with laundry flying from the rooftops. Then I realized the city itself was an invention of people from lost places, people forcibly resettled, fleeing war and massacre and each other, hungry, needing jobs. They were exiled home, to Athens, which spread toward the sea and over the lesser hills out into the Attic plain, direction-seeking. A compass of memory." (Don De Lillo, 1982)

according to the demand of the powerful and, before elections, according to the demand of the public. The whole system, one might think, could do much better without the tricky concessions, delays and pursuit of political profit. Therein rises the paradox; this problematic way of dealing with living space, private and public, is simply a different way. It may seem disordered and grotesque, but the truth is that it works for the benefit of all since it is the entire Greek society who represents and controls Greek para-urbanism (Philippides 2002, p.160).

Para-urbanism is an interesting conceptualisation of what might be happening in Greece, and it renders space as ambivalent.[134] Privately owned space can be 'expanded,' 'reshaped' and 'optimised.' Public space, on the other hand, can also be commodified (see restaurant, cafés and bar terraces, sea fronts, pedestrians' streets and squares) and therefore is often 'optimised' by shrinkage. The ambiguity of public space is not a new phenomenon and by no means a Greek privilege. This ambiguity concerns, furthermore, the right of someone or a group of people to be physically and symbolically present in urban space. I would be very interested to see if the immigrants in Greece share the same accessibility to para-urbanism as the Greeks do.

The Visible-Invisible Transnational

For years the media depicted Omonia square in Athens, and its neighbouring areas like Metaksurgio and Psiris, as immigrant ghettos where prostitution, drug use and larceny were considered common practices.[135] The official representative bodies of the residents of Metaksurgio, for example, have in the past expressed their view that the regeneration plans driven by the state should take radical measures, such as the removing of "foreigners," illegal immigrants, Gypsies originating from Turkey, and tougher policing (Konstantatos 2001, p.15).

In everyday life, Athens' transnational urbanities are almost invisible in these areas or actually their presence becomes obvious, following negotiable patterns, certain hours of the day and certain days of the week.

> "As Bourdieu would say, the contemporary ghettos of Bathi and Omonia areas, as residence places, symbolize a perpetual struggle between night and day. Every

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134 Para-urbanism may be a product of long inherited principles of conducting one's life in face to face societies such as the Greek.
"As in Athens, where it is a commonplace in judicial orations that appearances are taken to indicate reality, 'excessive care must be taken not to give the wrong indications even though the action behind these indications may be perfectly innocent.' Since the judgment of the community depends upon inferences from public behaviour, for repu-

tation the appearance of honor is more important than the reality. [...] What follows, since human beings are fallible, is that if reputation is to be preserved, then shameful acts must be hidden from the watchful, judgmental community. In the Greek villages studied by Campbell and du Boulay, lying thus necessarily becomes one of the most common strategies to preserve privacy." (Cohen 1991, p.95-6)

135 See Psimmenos (2004).

morning is the start of a struggle for survival, which is the only maybe element that reminds to the wider public the existence of this population, while at night the Albanian immigrants disappear within faceless residence places, far out from any sociability, preys to chance and marginality (Bourdieu, 1991). Between margin and resistance for survival and development, the Albanian immigrants trace, with their everyday experiences, a new social formation for Athens." (Psimmenos 2004, 150-1)

Athens, 2003. Metaksurgio area, Chinese retail.

As Orfanou (2001) has shown, the areas of Athens' centre host many immigrants; their intense presence since the early 90´s has left its marks. Their shops, restaurants and coffee shops are spatial appropriations, and gradually they don't need to claim spaces since spaces and streets become more and more of their own. Still, in the official public spaces such as squares, streets or shops frequented by natives, their presence remains discrete, and in the areas where they live they try to keep a low profile. Foreigners resort to social organisations which assure no more than the necessary contact with the Greeks. Regarding the Albanian social organisation in Greece, Psimmenos (2004) explains that it relies considerably on alliance to a group (especially at the early stages of their immigration in Greece). All aspects of their lives, from shelter to protection *from* the Greek police, to getting residence permits (forged most of the times), or moral support and mere survival, have been accommodated within groups. Group solidarity has been paramount and codes of behaviour and honour are outside the Greek state's reach, but quite close to similar codes of behaviour and honour of older Greek traditions themselves, like the Cretan vendetta.[136]

"Further from the social organization of Albanians in the squares of Bathi and Omonia in order to protect their lives, we have another side of this social issue. This has to do with the organization of life that deals with the creation and the remoulding of places for social intervention with cultural means and within the general life

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[136] In Karidis (1996, p.189) we read how Wolfgang (1958, p.188) demonstrated that different stimulations are perceived differently by different people, black or white, women or men. Therefore, the meaning of a joke, a slightly interiorising remark, the glimpse of gun, all are interpreted differentially. This, I think, may be the reason why certain violent crimes committed by certain ethnic groups bare the stamp of crimes of honour, or intercommunity disciplination.

framework of Albanians. […] Outside of the hotels one could see the Albanians at various corners in public to write or read their relatives' letters, at coffee shops to exchange goods and negotiate prices, or in the parks to eat with their friends. During the survey it was realized that spaces were transformed into places for recreation and social life, with great difficulties since Albanians at Vathi and Omonia Square were always under the threat of arrest and chased by local shop owners." (Psimmenos 2004, p.180)

Albanians maintain the minimum contacts with the locals and the locals in their turn show a remarkable ignorance concerning their immigrant neighbours. Albanians have a strong presence in the centre of Athens. Albanian women are mostly employed in the kitchens of taverns. The more than ten years long stay of Albanians in Athens has made it easier for them to find jobs in many sectors;[137] they are also the immigrant group with more chances for better houses (Orfanou 2001, p.47-48). Athens seems inhuman to its foreigners (some insist, not only to them), because of the huge numbers of cars, which is an idea deriving from the normally congested narrow streets of the centre, while the lack of greenery is a well established argument. The urban structure is very compact and at times quite out of the metropolitan scale. On the other hand, in areas as such Metaksurgio and Psiri there are neighbourhoods with old houses of one or two floors with inner yards, the favourite settlements for immigrants' extended families (Orfanou 2001, p.45). Transnational migrants walk in the city and use the public transport mainly towards Omonia square and the nearby Central food market. They navigate in Athens according to specific monuments, public buildings, big department stores, even friends' houses, but not street names. On Sundays they prefer the big open squares of the centre, the Ermou Pedestrian Street, big fast-food restaurants and a few cafes and pastry shops, all interestingly relatively far from their neighbourhoods. It is not usual to see immigrant inhabitants taking their Sunday leisure stroll in the public spaces of their neighbourhoods; these as if by an unspoken rule are left to the locals (Orfanou 2001, p.46). This could be interpreted as in line with the immigrants' strategy for minimum contact with the native locals; they spend their free time away so there is no chance of social mixing. N was positive that during Sunday mornings in the public spaces of the centre of Athens one doesn't hear so much Greek anymore. As s/he put it, Greeks don't go there anymore.[138] A reciprocal distance and ignorance rule between native and transnational neighbours, thus keeping the potential conflicts and the fear of troubles out of real space, and in the virtual but equally real one of the subconscious.

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[137] Still Albanians rank high in unemployment in regions such as the Western Greece.
"Unemployment experience is not linked with gender and with place of residence but it is connected with region of origin (x2 = 21.9, s=0.001); Albanians are overrepresented in unemployment experience." (Iosifides *et al.* 2006, p.101)

[138] Discussion No11 (Athens, 13.10.2003), with N. an academic of National Technical University.

Orfanou has shown that immigrants don't fit into the urban gentrification or regeneration processes taking place in the centre of Athens. This process has been going on for some time but it has been accelerated due to the Olympic games of 2004. They don't contribute to the polished image the state wants for the historic administrative and commercial centre of the capital. In fact they don't contribute in the marketing of the nostalgic old Athenian milieu. It seems that the decision makers of the renewed urban centre of Athens may motivate the sprawl of leisure industry, but seem reluctant in recognising the presence and traces of foreigners on the terrain of urban renewal (Orfanou 2001, p.50-51).

3.4 OMONIA SQUARE

The Omonia Square is a place that has gone through many transformations, which I argue, authorities dealt with it as AJ put it, technocratically, as a geometric space. Omonia Square was a product of political thinking, and eventually a transportation hub.[139] I will briefly present the story of Omonia with the assistance of remarkable research done on Athenian public spaces by the Greek architect Eugenia Melabianaki (2006).[140] From her work I borrow the documented history of Omonia. I also rely on the research carried out by Nikos

Athens, approx. early 20th century. Omonia Square. Ginakou Archive, Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

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[139] Discussion No35 (Athens, 2.11.2004), with AJ. an academic of Panteio University.

[140] Melabianaki, E. (2006). *ΟΙ ΠΛΑΤΕΙΕΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΘΗΝΑΣ: 1834-1945. ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ ΔΙΑΜΟΡΦΩΣΗΣ, ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑ, ΠΟΛΕΟΔΟΜΙΚΗ ΣΗΜΑΣΙΑ*. [The Squares of Athens: 1834-1945. The Process of Formation, Function, Urban Significance]. Doctoral Dissertation. Athens: National Technical University of Athens, Department of Urban Planning (in Greek).

Georgopoulos (1999) on the history of Omonia Square. The name, Omonia Square, translates as Concorde Square. The original name of the square, though, was Othon Square, in honour of the first imported monarch of the Greek kingdom. In 1864, with a new king on board, and after the troubled departure of the previous one, the authorities decided to rename the square Omonia Square. Omonia:

> "[…] means to share the same opinion with others, it means agreement, and togetherness in harmony. The antonym is disunity [division, discord, dissension, dispute, and mischief]. This of course has been a very symbolic name, which the authorities wished to characterise a new era. Athens seizes to be attached to the hill of the ancient Acropolis. Omonia Square therefore signifies the opposite pole, the contradistinction to [the actual place of power] the Constitution Square." (Georgopoulos 1999, p.5)

Past

Omonia today stands where, in the 1830s, there had been a ravine and rubbish dump for the municipality of Athens. In 1846, procedures started for the realisation of a square at the site. The square was at the fringes of the city of Athens and the country-side style cafés were an attraction pole for Athenians indulging in the pleasures of the new capital. During the early decades of the square's life, the first buildings embracing it were mostly residential – manor houses – with commercial uses at the ground level; this changed radically when hotels were built around the square. In the 1870s the square was a cosmopolitan centre for entertainment, where the upper and middle class enjoyed the hospitality of the cafés while the poorer Athenians sat on the benches of the square. In 1889, the two grand hotels 'Pageion' and 'Alexander the Great' were built, by the architect Ziller (Georgopoulos 1999, p.12). 1880 seems to have been a crucial year for the evolution of the square.

As the growing capital was in need of an efficient public transport system, the character of the square was redefined as a centre for short and long-distance transportation. Thereafter the square became, and has never since ceased to be, a transportation hub, and a meeting place of social importance. In such a place there is no doubt that considerable political brewing took place. An avant-gardism was slowly cultivated, with the intelligentsia of Athens finding there a place with the necessary buzz. Theatres, hotels, live-music cafés and coffee houses for Greek migrants coming from different regions of Greece, cater variously to the poor and the wealthy. The centre of state power was the nearby Constitution Square with the palace of the monarch.

In his research, Georgopoulos (1999) explains that at the beginning of the 20th century Mayor Mercouris was the visionary who beautified the square before the difficult times of

Omonia Square. Athens, approx. 1930. Photographer Pericles Papahatzidakis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

Omonia Square. Athens, approx. 1930. Photographer Pericles Papahatzidakis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

Asia Minor's disastrous war and the influx of refugees halted the revamping of Omonia for at least a few years. The square entered the 20th century dirty and neglected soon, to be transformed into an urban garden, fenced and pretty. Public toilets were constructed, and electric lights lit the square. In the mid-war period, the functions of the square remained roughly the same, while some new edifices were built and created a firmer enclosure. Melabianaki (2006, vol. II p.186) tells us that in this period and between 1938 and 1939, the building was constructed which for decated housed the famous meeting point of Mpakakos pharmacy. This building, since the recent redesign of the square, houses one of the boutiques for the international fashion brand ZARA. In 1925 the authorities decided to place the terminal electric railway station of the capital right under the square (Georgopoulos 1999, p.18). For a few years the square was turned into a construction site, the result of which was an underground railway station, while more public facilities were placed on the ground: kiosks, telephone booths and flower shops. The tendency for the square to turn into a transportation hub was reinforced by the fact that eight out of fifteen tram lines for the city had their terminal here. The transformation of the square during the German occupation of Athens was dramatic.

> "[…] the occupation arrived and the people of the square changed into black marketers, snatchers, sellers and victims. […] the grids of station shafts exhaling warm air proved to be the life savers for many Athenian homeless children." (Georgopoulos 1999, p.19)

The next big transformation of the square came towards the end of the 1950s, when the modernist ideals for urban space made it necessary to separate the growing number of pedestrians from the growing number of vehicles. The underground station ceased to be a terminal for the electric train from then on, and four electric escalators placed in the periphery of the square have since then been loading and unloading people from the underground to the ground level. The peripheral pavements were widened to facilitate the growing pedestrian circulation. A roundabout was built and in its centre a fountain; the square once more became the sign of Athens' modernisation and has continued to play that role for decades. For the following forty years the centre of the square would be inaccessible to pedestrians.[141] Nevertheless the square lost no importance. It was in the next twenty years that great manor houses were flattened and replaced with modern multi-storey buildings (Georgopoulos 1999, p.21). Most Greek movies in the 60s and 70s would have at least one shot of the square.

Georgopoulos (1999, p.11) informs us that Omonia Square had always been the product of political figures who one way or another influenced, shaped and reshaped the square; from

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[141] The fountain was a decorative element; unlike what Whyte proposed.
"Water should be accessible, touchable, splashable."
(Whyte 1980, p.49)

Omonia Square. Athens, 1959. Photographer Dimitris Harisiadis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

Omonia Square. Athens, August 1959. Photographer Dimitris Harisiadis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

Omonia Square. Athens, April 1961. Photographer Dimitris Harisiadis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

Omonia Square. Athens, April 1961. Photographer Dimitris Harisiadis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

its instigators the architects Leo von Klenze, Kleanthis and Schaubert, to Othon, the first monarch of Greece, and many of Athens' mayors. However, Athenians too were active in transforming Athens' centre for better or worse.

> "Klenze [he was behind the master plan that would transform Athens from a small village-like town to the Greek capital] faced with the objections of Athenians about the plans, preferred to practice politics than urban planning. The streets and squares shrank in comparison to the original plans; as a result of this the centre of Athens today remains jammed due to its narrow streets. The Athenian land owners were enthusiastic with Klenze's ideas. The operation succeeded but the patient died [metaphorically speaking the patient was Athens]." (Georgopoulos 1999, p.8)

After the fall of the colonels' dictatorship in 1974, Omonia Square slowly became a vital place for political expression. It was later that the square started showing signs of spiralling decadence. The square has witnessed many socio-political movements and became the centre of public contestations on various occasions; it has been and still is a famous location for demonstrations, especially since for years the Greek Communist party had its headquarters here. In a beautification process in 1988 the municipality included Omonia in the cultural regeneration of Athens' public spaces: the fountain was replaced with the glass sculpture of the "Runner" amidst a water basin.

Omonia Square. Athens, March 1963. Photographer Dimitris Harisiadis. Courtesy Museum Mpenaki Athens.

"[…] a monumental abstract figure of a runner, symbolising the escape from the city." (Georgopoulos 1999, p.26)

The last dramatic change for the square would come once more in an effort to upgrade the city's transportation system. In 1991 the plan for Athens' metro requires changed and an architectural competition was announced for the redesign of Omonia, the outcome of which divided the country and turned the square's circle into a rectangle. The previously deteriorated underground electric railway was to be transformed into a multilevel metro station.

Omonia and Xénos [142]

Omonia square remains a highly symbolic central space for Athens; with the rectangle front shaped by the buildings facing the square, the circle that for years has been chosen to arrange the circulation of vehicles in the square, the neoclassical buildings, some of which survived the modernisation of the 60's to remind us of the glorious past, the streets converging on the square still bearing the same names, the areas around the square and the district of Haftia, and finally the fact that it is still the centre of the city and the most collective and democratic public square in the whole country (Georgopoulos 1999, p.30-32).

Omonia Square is the most visited, vivid, pluralistic place, at the intersection of all the social currents and trends. Athenians come here to express their approval or disapproval regarding important events, political and athletic, participating in protests and rallies. Omonia has for decades catered to the 'Other' of Athens, and all societal problems have found a central stage here upon which to unfold. This has been an indisputable social function of Omonia Square (Melabianaki 2006, Vol. I, p.374-377). However, the recognised social function of the square also excludes the 'Other' that inhabits it. This is particularly the case since the arrival of foreigners en mass in the early 90s, foreigners whose rights to the square still seem to be in search of acknowledgment.

The Albanian Xénos

The thirty years of communist rule in Albania came to an end in 1985 with the death of the country's post-war ruler, Enver Hoxha. Then Albania embarked on a troubled process of democratisation. After a long period of isolation, the newly introduced freedom, along with the

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[142] In Greek *xénos* means foreign, alien, other and strange.

country's instability, opened the way for thousands of Albanians to abandon their country. In 1993 alone, 500,000 Albanians arrived in Athens. This was the first occurrence of foreigners en masse entering Greece (Theodorou 2002, p.28). Albanians today constitute the largest and most controversial immigrant group in Greece (Kasimati 2003, p.38).[143] The absence of systematic help from the Greek state forced most immigrants, including Albanians, to invent strategies for coping with social and spatial exclusion. Between 1991 and 1993 Psimmenos (2004) conducted research on Albanians residing in and around Omonia Square, showing how Omonia became Albanians' inhospitable 'home.'

> "The centre of Athens, the poor neighbourhoods of Vathi and Omonia, where the living standards are low in every aspect, is transformed into contemporary receiving ghettos for immigrants. These neighbourhoods, places that reproduce poverty, criminality and the danger for immigrants' health, luck of welfare and any kind of social intervention, they define as such the living standards. […] In these places is reproduced the policy of individual survival, since the state and the local society are absent in the discourse on what is and is not acceptable." (Psimmenos 2004, p.172)

The Albanians of the early 90s influx had to stay cramped in unspeakable hotels, sleep in the underground station, on benches, in deserted cars, deal with hostile Greek authorities and public, put up with being persecuted, exploited beyond imagination, and often arrested, assaulted and/or deported. During the famous 90s' 'broom' operations, the police cleaned Omonia of illegal Albanian immigrants.

> "Such kind of 'broom'-operations [police raids for 'sweeping'] is socially flattening thus unsuccessful and socially condemns minors in a continuous sexual exploitation. The arrest and expulsion of underage immigrants reminds us that the social poverty, discrimination and exploitation of the Albanian immigrant penalize the victim itself, as if it is her/his fault for her/his social status in Athens."
> (Psimmenos 2004, p.197-8)

When discussing issues relating to transnational people, one should not underestimate their agency. Albanians knew that if they wanted to survive during their first difficult times in Athens, they had to be around Omonia. All kinds of minorities found a place here, for sure not in the best of conditions, nevertheless they did. Although there is, by now, a large population of Albanians who have their homes, cafés and meeting points elsewhere, outside

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143 Kasimati writes that the exact total number of Albanians in Greece cannot be calculated. This is partly due to their mobility, and partly to the illegal and undocumented entrance of many Albanians into Greece.

Omonia, still many continue to come to the square. The square may have lost its function as the place for immigrant job seekers, but it remains an important social space, and I believe it has taken on a symbolic character for Albanians; it is their square too, even as euphemism.

Changing Omonia

In 1998, the Unification of Archaeological sites of Athens S.A. announced a European architectural competition for the redesign of the square. The winning team of four young Greek architects never saw their plans fully realised. In 2003, when the square was open to public use while yet unfinished, most people protested and saw the architects whose designs won as scapegoats. The authorities decided to appoint a team of experts to make the square more acceptable. The square remained the hang-out of many marginalized groups, among them many illegal immigrants, and drug addicts. Although in the announcement of the competition in 1998 the participants were never asked to change the profile of the square and push out the unwanted urbanites, this became an argument when the square was given to the public and the authorities noticed that people remained the same. The architects started a legal dispute, based on their beliefs that there is no architecture to correct or hide the reality of a society. It wasn't among their ambitions to push out the everyday stake holders of whom the authorities don't approve.

> "The team's ambition was to host the human puzzle that uses the centre of Athens, since neighbouring to the archaeological venues of the "ostrich like" middle class and its illusion exist other venues less attractive" (Desilas, Katsika, Tsiatas, & Vozani 2003)[144]

It is evident from the recent history of Omonia Square that public space is a matter of taste for the state's authorities. They may briefly reward proposals for spatial multiculturalism and inclusive diversity, however in the end they resort to 'cleanness' and order, 'new image' and social inconsideration. The people inhabiting the square were only briefly referred to in the competition proclamation, maybe out of fear that the state authorities would take a stand and openly declare that there were indeed socially undesirables occupying Omonia square who should be removed, and then make this a criterion for assessment of the design proposals. Then there might have been a proposal for the redesign of Omonia that would have satisfied at least the authorities. Instead, nobody was happy, maybe not even the immigrants or other marginalized people, although we can never be sure of that since nobody would go to the trouble of asking them.[145]

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[144] Article addressed to Greek newspapers.

[145] Discussion No33 (Athens, 28.10.2004), with AE an Albanian political activist.

Athens, 2003. The redesigned Omonia Square.

Athens, 2006. Omonia square.

Present

A decisive fact for the character of Omonia Square is that the authorities manage it as a transportation hub. On the ground we have Omonia Square, while on the underground level there has been a second square, and these two squares interact and inform one another.[146] This relation has been under-theorised but is still very crucial for the social space of Omonia. The sheer number of people from the whole social spectrum unloaded at these two levels has been increasing as a result of the general growth of the city, and of the registering of Omonia as an accessible point of arrival and departure, in other words a meeting point. The newly established Athens' metro, with its frequent trains, accelerates the rhythm of change of the square due to the efficient and rapid renewal of crowds.[147] The underground station has been smartened up at its transfer levels with two big art works by two renowned Greek artists.[148] Still, it is far less embellished compared to the new and monumental station of Constitution Square.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square, the underground metro station.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. From the new main reception area of the station to one of the older platforms.

The shabbiness of the previous station is still somehow apparent. The peripheral escalators and gates to the underground level still bear the signs of the 'old' Omonia. Is it possible for Omonia not to be the 'salad-bowl' of Athens? The square's fate wasn't accidental; there were serious technical decisions that determined its plurality. One of those decisions has been the authorities' persistent approach to the area as one in need of technocratic solutions. Omonia has been transformed from a dump to an open square to a garden to an automobile-dominated terrain, from a roundabout to a rectangle, all the while sustaining its function as a transportation nucleus. The agenda for every redesign process, as far as I understand it, has

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146 Discussion No34 (Athens, 29.10.2004), with Q a Greek architect. Q said that the architectural team for the redesign of Omonia Square wanted to somehow communicate the fast and intense life of the undeground metro and train station to Omonia Square above.

147 According to the official site of Attiko Metro of Athens, during rush hours the frequency of trains is three minutes, while in non-rush hours it is five to ten minutes (www.ametro.gr).

148 *ibid.*

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. The renovated underground station. Art work by Nikos Kessanlis.

been to ameliorate the circulation of vehicles and people horizontally and vertically through the city and the square itself. The areas around and beyond Omonia Square have been largely ignored; with the exception of beautifying gestures and intense policing.[149] The square itself has been dealt with, as Lefebvre (1997) would put it, as an abstract space. That space, though, got a life of its own and the resulting plurality still puzzles the experts, the state authorities and the public at large. Such a space of undeniable accessibility attracted users and opportunists, Greeks and foreigners. Such a place couldn't be picturesque for long. The Athenian bourgeoisie left and the 'demos' ruled. All tastes must be catered to, but especially those of the disenfranchised 'Other' who found a common ground. The cheap accommodation, the cheap eateries, the cheap sex, the cheap entertainment; still the live of the people frequenting Omonia shouldn't be regarded as 'cheap.' Unfortunately, that is what has happened. Junkies, pimps, immigrants, and clandestine people have to negotiate what in one way or another wasn't meant to be rightfully theirs, but as it happens it is theirs too.

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149 There is a police station inside the Omonia station *(www.ametro.gr).*

The Omonia Square I have experienced, and the one my informants helped me to perceive, is as ugly as the eyes of the beholder, as dirty as one wants it to be. It is a terrain for profit and the city needs to regulate it. It is a diverse space and many feel disgust.[150] The urban malaise is once again overly exploited in order to sensationalise and allow for revanchist gentrification to occur and other bigger profits to be made. Cafés and eateries are prevalent at the street level of Omonia Square. McDonald's is the only international fast food restaurant on the square, its air-conditioned environment catering to tourists and better off Greeks. There are more Greek chain and take-away eateries like 'Goody's' and 'Everest,' as well as cheaper traditional 'corners' offering pizza and skewered meat. 'Neon' is the oldest café-restaurant still present. The international chain, Starbucks, has a branch a bit off Omonia Square. Most of these eateries are guarded by security, and from my experience, Neon with its 24hour service has a quite strict policy of accessibility; non potential costumers, like hustlers, junkies, beggars or ragged people are not allowed in. At 'Goody's', the glass doors are normally kept wide open and it is by far the most popular and accessible place. The café and terrace of the 'Omonia' hotel is more exclusive under the watchful eyes of security and staff. In 2006 there was only one terrace at Omonia square. A few cloth and accessories shops are trying to be dazzling with their glittered merchandise. There are a few more small shops selling knick-knacks while a Swatch shop must rely on its affordable range of watches to attract customers. The two newer mega-stores are the international multi-storey boutique 'ZARA,' and the Greek department store 'Hondos Centre.' The glass doors at 'ZARA' are normally closed with a guard behind them. At 'Hondos Centre,' the management seems to aim at a more popular profile and keeps the doors open and of course guarded. The top-floor café-restaurant of 'Hondos' caters to the better-off consumers who can get an elevated glimpse of the Acropolis over the hustle of the square. The multi-storey buildings at Omonia Square house at least three revamped hotels – though there are many more around Omonia square – and there is admittedly quite a lot of office space. There are lawyers, real estate agents, middle men's offices, a few sex shops, quite a few pawnshops and a wide assortment of other establishments. The pawnshops have been adding to Omonia's allure of adventurism. It is not un-

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150 "Two years after its costly and much-debated makeover for the Athens Olympics, Omonia Square in the city center has turned into a gathering place for drug dealers, addicts and other criminals, police sources told Sunday's Kathimerini. Omonia is Athens's second-largest square but is much busier than Syntagma and police targeted the area as part of their efforts to move street traders, vagrants and drug addicts away from the city center before visitors arrived in Athens. However, Omonia is not such a welcoming place now, officers say. 'Late in the evening, when there are not many passers-by, drug addicts appear in the square from the surrounding streets. Sometimes they number up to 600 people,' a police source told Sunday's Kathimerini. The patrol officer, who did not want to be named, said that most of the addicts are homeless Greeks who have either come to Athens to enrol in a detoxification program or to get away from their families. He said dealers only come into the square to sell heroin and then leave immediately. Shop owners and people running kiosks in the area say they are continuously trying to prevent addicts from stealing things from their businesses. Hoteliers have also lodged complaints about the deterioration of the area. 'They are constantly sending us letters to report that the situation in Omonia is driving customers away and damaging their businesses,' said Katerina Katsabe-Marneri, a member of the Athens City Council. She said that the municipality and the police do not have the power to move people out of the square, adding that only a directive from a prosecutor could bring this about." (Souliotis 2006)

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. The kiosk with the Albanian press in early morning hours.

Athens, 2002. One of the kiosks at Omonia Square.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. The telephone booths of Omonia are occupied mostly by immigrants.

common for these multi-storey buildings that replaced the square's old manor houses in the 60s and 70s to provide one toilet unit per floor, and to have their own small cafés and snack bars at the mid-floor between the ground and the 1st floor. Given the character of the square and the area, most of these buildings have a caretaker who also checks on the whereabouts of visitors. They are not the easiest people, as probably they are supposed to screen as well as guard the premises.[151] The Bank of Greece also has a branch at Omonia, and its authoritative and polished-up facades already repel many non-customers. According to my research diary of 27.10.2004 at 14:00 close to NEON, and the entire rabble, I observed that there was a branch of the National Bank of Greece. I entered, pashing in front of the security guards, to get advantage of the air-conditioning and to rest sitting at the waiting hall. In the hall there were people who had taken their queue number and waited their turn to be assisted. I just wanted to rest and I could do that without any problem. I realised that we were all Greeks in that air-conditioned waiting hall; no foreign looking people, neither clients nor visitors like me were to be seen.

On the square there are many kiosks selling everything from telephone cards, stamps, cigarettes, condoms, soft-drinks and bottles of water, to industrially prepared snacks, chewing-gum, and magazines. A couple of kiosks specialise in explicit pornographic material that is on display all over their facades. Another kiosk offers exclusively the major Albanian newspapers, available in Albania and in Athens. The personnel inside the kiosks, and some outside to watch the hanging merchandise, seem to have seen everything; they are outspoken,

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Magazines on display at the square.

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[151] For a positive outlook on guards as underused assets of public spaces see W. H. Whyte (1980, p.64).

sharp and laconic. There are also a few stands selling magazines and newspapers, and some others targeting the hungry passer-by, selling sesame rolls, chestnuts in the winter, and corns in the summer.

One of the initiatives of the architectural team for the regeneration of Omonia Square was to propose the abolishment of the signs attached to the facades of the buildings; this has been seen as a positive gesture to ease the visual cacophony and reveal the renovated facades of the neoclassical buildings as well as the modernism of the more recent ones.

In the surrounding area of Omonia Square, the streets connecting main roads are narrow, and this makes manoeuvring not an easy task for drivers, or for pedestrians who have to jump over tightly parked cars. A very limited pedestrianisation has given some priority to easy walking, and encouraged some cafés and restaurants to rent outdoor space for their tables and chairs. Still, the overall ambience of the area hasn't taken off and the sporadic greenery hasn't been a great feature for regenerating the area. The uses and the resources have not correlated to a common objective, therefore the state and the real estate and private investment capital are at odds with the current and older uses at the area. There are at least four sex movie theatres all approximately five to fifteen minutes walk off the Square.

> "Could the sex cinemas be considered cultural centres? Why not? They provide entertainment and relaxation from the daily routine. Anyway, Omonia doesn't afford art galleries, monuments, or status; nothing upon which the eye of the passer may rest. It is fortunate that the Municipal Picture-gallery at Pireos Street, at the beautiful neoclassical building of the ex-municipal public nursery, even if it has very few visitors. It is a pride as well the 'National Theatre' at Saint Constantine's Street, the one and only temple of art in the whole area; a theatrical oasis right in the arid city centre, occupied by eateries of every kind." (Philippou 2000, p.128)[152]

How public is Omonia Square? It seems to me that Omonia is a public space par excellence. Maybe nowhere else in Athens can this coexistence of persistently different groups take place. Here the public spheres of different groups are perpetually entered and exited, shoulders brush each other, looks are exchanged, nasty looks too. Fewer people use the redesigned centre of the square in the daytime, especially on weekdays. Later at night a heterogeneous group of people gather around the concrete tiers at the centre of the square. The only spot where an apparent concentration of predominantly Albanian men can be observed is around the kiosk with the Albanian newspapers, and in front of 'Neon'.

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[152] Philippos Philippou wrote his book *Omonia 2000, A Journey at the Navel of Athens*, with photographs by photographer Kalafati. Although the book is not scientific, it is nevertheless a genuine anthropological view of Omonia Square in a very humane and poetic way. Some of the titles of the book chapters are "A Country-man in Omonia," "Ode to the Pita-Giros Eateries," "Albanian Tourist," "The Kingdom of the Kiosks," "Hanging Newspapers," "The Screen Sinks," etc.

Athens, 2006. Goody's fast food restaurant.

In Omonia IDs and passports may be requested, occasionally one may witness fights, frustrated people, traffic of any kind. One evening in Omonia an older woman prostituting young women solicited me. Despite the obvious incogruity, on clear nights from the centre of the square and through the axis of Athinas Street, one may catch an idyllic glimpse of the lit ancient Acropolis. It is hardly surprising, then, that quite a few people crowd the tiers at night when the weather is agreeable; many more, including me, might join if there weren't the fear of being close to the 'Other' of Athens. After my peripatetic discussion with AE and all that I read about, and observed in Omonia, I realised how differently different people perceive difference, and what is acceptable and on whose conditions.

3.5 SOCIAL PROJECT

Even if Omonia was approached as a transportation hub, it was however much more than that and I argue the same for the Helsinki Railway Station, as we will see in the next part. The social aspects of these spaces must be acknowledged, if nothing else, to be fair to their public use. What, I should ask, is fair in this case? Is there a certain path to socio-spatial justice? Although a perilous business, answering such questions seems vital. I will only make a brief attempt drawing from the ideas of two Canadian scholars concerning radical urban politics. Their case refers to Toronto, however, their ideas on multiculturalism and urbanism have a much wider potential and applicability. Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005), referring to Lefebvre's (2003, 1997) ideas and Davis' (2000) *magical urbanism*, deconstruct multiculturalism. Their analysis is based on their critical attempt to construct the model of bourgeois urbanism only to show the potential of radical urbanism.

> "[…] multiculturalism in Canada is best understood as an influential, liberal-cosmopolitan component of 'bourgeois urbanism': an ensemble of strategies, knowledge forms and everyday sensibilities that has absorbed subcultural practices and socio-political aspirations into dominant processes of capitalist urbanization

and popular milieus shaped by elite and new middle-class fractions. […] Unlike the prevalent post-colonial deconstruction of multiculturalism in this regard, our differentiated critique of it borrows from both Canadian and international debates to propose a productive synthesis of urban Marxism and radical anti-racist feminism." (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005, p.671)

Bourgeois urbanism, from Goonewardena & Kipfer's (2005) perspective, bears a resemblance to Smith's revanchism.[153] I have argued that the gentrification at the centre of Athens also bears signs of a Greek-style revanchism; immigrant and urban policies are expected to get harder and more conservative (Galanakis 2005a, 2005b). This trend is not limited to the European South (traditionally poorer and less advanced than the North); instead, northern European welfare states show similar signs, too. In this context, Philippides' (2002) Greek para-urbanism, with its insurgent character, semi-covered, and semi-institutionalised, may be seen as a hopeful resistance to state authorities. A sign of healthy power struggle? Within para-urbanism the grassroots are exercising whatever negotiative power they may possess, directly or indirectly in order to influence the official urbanism of the state. I want to point out that my own experience as a freelance architect in Greece has proved to me that the 'corrupted' part of the state authorities, and most experts discretely practice para-urbanism.

Multiculturalism

"Enshrined in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, multiculturalism in Canada today includes a sprinkling of state-led initiatives 'working to achieve equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada', even as it continues to be centred on its original, strongly ethnicized and racialized agenda of admitting and preserving 'ethnic' (non-English, non-French) immigrant cultures. As such, multiculturalism presently serves as a convenient label for an unevenly dense array of interventions at all scales of the state (see Kobayashi, 1993). In the newly amalgamated Toronto, for example, it acts as the reference point for a wide range of policies and practices that many local activists and some critical academics call 'diversity management.' These include multicultural school board policies, special

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153 "[…] a right-wing movement of 'revenge' for the presumed 'excesses' of the liberal 1960s that seeks to revive what it sees as the 'traditional values' of America. But, as Smith is quick to point out, this revanchism is not solely a right-wing movement. Indeed, some of its most infamous moments, such as the closing of Tompkins Square Park,[in N.Y.C] were the result of liberal urban administrations (N. Smith 1996, 220)." (Mitchell 2003a, p.164)

Regarding a temporary alliance between Latinos and "shrinking white electorate to marginalize African Americans" in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, and its revanchist potential for "white political elites":
"Savvy conservative pundits of both parties have applauded this realignment, reasoning that Latinos' inevitable demands will generate more conflict with Blacks and thus become the final nail in the coffin of urban liberalism." (Davis 2000, p. 138)

support for 'minority' business, multi-lingual municipal communication strategies, (meagre) grants to 'ethno-cultural' NGOs, (perfunctory) citizen consultation mechanisms, 'public-private' city branding strategies such as Toronto's (flawed and failed) bid for the 2008 Olympics and the City's official logo: Diversity is our strength!" (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005, p.671)

And

"Precisely in this rarely noted ambiguity of Canadian multiculturalism lies its proven ability to render hegemonic – with lofty invocations of liberal-cosmopolitan pieties – the predictably resilient project of bourgeois urbanism." (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005, p.672)

The above excerpts refer to the Canadian normative and ethno-racially centered multiculturalism. In Greece such conceptions regarding multiculturalism would be considered advanced beyond imagination, while ethno-racial divisions exist and propagate.[154] In Finland, on the other hand, the bourgeois urbanism seems to go hand in hand with the aesthetisation of difference in an alleged multiculturalism very difficult to grasp since the ethno-racial divisions are substantial.[155]

Multiculturalism and its prevalent conceptions, concerning policy making as well as practices of everyday life, are important for our discussion because these conceptions influence spatial organisation and urban design in our cities. When, in case of Athens, multiculturalism is in its infancy at all levels of political and everyday life – though in the micro scale of the vernacular examples of humane interchange do take place – spatial organisation is admittedly caught in ideas of a *national* space (Konstantopoulos 2001, p.21). Finnish multiculturalism has been cultivated more in a top-down manner facilitated by one comprehensive multicultural centre in Helsinki (CAISA) and a few ethnic food and music festivals during the summer time. At this point Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005, p.674) call for attention; that, what I call 'gourmet' multi-culturalism (or just culturalism according to them) conveniently silences socio-economic divisions in the city, and as I see it, it creates the *illusion* of open, inclusive and welfarist urban space. In practice, eventually, the market economy decides who goes where.[156]

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[154] See for example Karidis (1996); Psimmenos (2003, 2004); Kasimati (2003); Galanis (2003); Imam & Tsakiridi (2003).

[155] See Makkonen (2000).
"Clearly, combating racism is an issue for the whole society, its institutions and processes. However, although overt racist acts such as violent assaults are widely condemned, some forms of racism may remain unnoticed by the ma-

jority, perhaps because of the missing possibilities to detect covert forms of racism. As expressed earlier (Virtanen 1998a), racist practices seem to be interwoven into the institutions of society." (Virtanen 2001, p.124)

[156] Despite the ARAVA system for social housing that allegedly homogenises Finnish urban space by hindering ghetto-isation. Discussion No22 (Helsinki, 16.3.2004), with Y at the Helsinki City Planning Office.

"Oblivious to the relentless logic of commodification that this 'cultural turn' so patently represents, both multiculturalists and their liberal, conservative and poststructuralist critics have remained mostly mute on not only the polarizations of social life along class, gender and race lines, but also the revanchist neoliberalism that clearly rules globalizing cities such as Toronto […]" (Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005, p.674)

Iris Marion Young (2002) offers her model of self-determination with minimum domination; in it I see a broad conception of diversity politics, through group formation, negotiation and agency. In this model the management of conflict acquires a central role. Young's effort to present this model in a universally applicable fashion is based on the principle of human rights involving "all the world's people"; however, much criticism can be addressed to the kind of global institutional regulations Young advocates. Nonetheless, Young's interpretation of self-determination is inspiring as a way to treat diversity on an egalitarian basis; multiculturalism then can be seen as one diversifying system among others. Or conversely, culturalism could be seen as one system of domination among others.

"In practice recognizing a right of self-determination in ways that minimize dominative implications must take different forms, depending on the degree of hybridity and multiculturalism among the contestants, the ways other individuals and groups may be affected, the manner and degree to which the contestants differentiate themselves, and the history of a region. Self-determination as non-domination should allow many multicultural or cosmopolitan jurisdictions." (Young 2002, p.262)

"[…] self-determining peoples require recognized and settled institutions and procedures through which they negotiate, adjudicate conflicts, and enforce agreements. Self-determination does not imply independence, but rather that peoples dwell together within political institutions which minimize domination among them. Finally, the self-determination of peoples requires that the peoples have the right to participate in designing and implementing intergovernmental institutions aimed at minimizing domination. In these ways a non-domination interpretation of a principle of self-determination enacts ideals of differentiated solidarity, in principle on a global scale." (Young 2002, p.265)

Conflicts

"[…] we must recognize that the promise of the city consists not in simply celebrating the plurality of actually existing differences give to us under the signs of 'cultural diversity': multiculturalism, diaspora and creolization. Rather, the future lies, to adopt a phrase from Perry Anderson (1992: 45), in a plethora of produced differences in everyday life, aimed at a genuinely socialist 'diversity founded on a far greater plurality and complexity of possible ways of living that any community of equals, no longer divided by class, race or gender, would create.' For only in a disalienated city produced by citizens in their everyday life can we as creative human beings hope to find our true identity amidst real difference. And it is in anticipation of struggle for such a city that we appreciate Mike Davis's critical celebration of 'magical urbanism.'"(Goonewardena & Kipfer 2005, p. 676)

Helsinki, 2002. Reclaim the street event.

The relation I try to establish here between multiculturalism and urban, particularly public space in our cities seems far fetched; however, multiculturalism, differently seen and more encompassing, may indeed lead to a plurality of radical urbanisms. But what is radical about *radical* urbanism? Goonewardena & Kipfer seem to justify the utopianism of radical urbanism (as opposed to overarching capitalism) with Lefebvre's(1997) *maximal* difference in the city. Shall we eliminate differences based on class, race, and gender, or rather see them within

Helsinki, 2004. Anti-war protest. Senate Square.

a context of differences specifically experienced and actually produced rather than induced by *unalienated human relationships*? Is Lefebvre's (2003) urban self-management the key to a radical urbanism that would allow urbanites to produce difference?[157]

Utopia is never outdated, as it is never quite realised; however, a utopia expressed, in words or drawings, is even more powerful than one which when realised, fails the aspirations that led to its conception at first place. I don't mean to sound pessimistic concerning the idea of a disalienated city; on the contrary. The conception, facilitation and creative handling of the struggles for such a city demand audacious work of all of us. But how do we do this? A noteworthy recent work makes a point valuable contribution to our understanding of conflicts in the production and experience of public urban space.

> "While hunting for weak places, people's experiences and memories about emotionally moving moments and thoughts about personally important sites, I found a rich 'scene' of conflicts about urban issues. Instead of the personal, the public seemed important and potential for our project. The citizens of Joensuu seemed to love urban conflicts, and I realised that *conflicts were triggered only by issues people truly cared about*. You do not passionately fight for nothing! Conflicts were signs of the most important local issues and they could be used as a guideline to find the social and spatial contours of public urban space." [Concerning an open-ideas-competition for the urban waterfront in Joensuu] (Lehtovuori 2005, p. 257)

Lehtovuori (2005) talks about the dialectical production of public urban space wherein, following the lead of Rajanti (1999), he confirms that

> "Public urban space is best understood as a suspended conflict, constantly unfolding on time […] in a game-like production of space." (Lehtovuori 2005, p. 170)

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[157] See Lefebvre (2003) [1970], chapter 7 in *The Urban Revolution*; a torrential manifest for urban change.

Lehtovuori (2005) establishes his hypothesis on the importance of the, temporality of public urban spaces frequently neglected by experts, and the potential of public urban *events*. Urban struggles and conflicts are central in Lehtovuori's analysis of public urban space. Despite my hesitation concerning the aestheticisation of yet another possibility for radical urbanism, namely urban conflict, I appreciate his analysis, and we share many views.

> "An important question is, which issues and strongly felt moments do *not* spark public, urban conflicts. A potential example might be immigrants' problem in finding cultural 'pockets' in Helsinki. […] Currently this is a latent question, not a conflict. Probably, immigrants do not have the societal and cultural resources to raise their concern to an urban conflict. This 'silence' most likely concerns many other weakly positioned groups and 'publics.' […] I have to conclude that while urban conflict can be a vehicle for the dominated to produce space and, thus, gain power, the differences between age, occupation, ethnic background and probably gender do play a role. Planners, therefore, should be sensitive towards signals of conflict and tension. Knowing that planning can never collect the experiences of all people, and knowing, too, that the story told about one's experience loses the acuteness of the lived situation, urban conflict appears to be a valuable 'asset' for the new planning practice. In conflict, individual experiences become public and shared such a way that the directly lived is not lost. The tensioned moment of community, tied together in a conflict, is indeed acutely lived and active. This is why conflicts are so interesting from the point of experiential urbanism." (Lehtovuori 2005, p. 268)

Athens, 2004. Anti-racist protest in Omonia Square. A banner: neither Greeks nor Albanians, faithless, stateless & anarchists.
(From: http://athens.indymedia.org/local/webcast/uploads/metafiles/1guange.jpg)

Here is where my hesitation about urban struggles being aestheticised is nurtured: despite the differential opportunities – according to age, gender, race, income, sexual orientation, and so on – to publicise ones' voice of difference in the city, conflicts are 'so interesting' for experts. The latter should "[…] stop trusting in distancing representations and try to suspend the unfolding conflict." (Lehtovuori 2005, p.270). Conflicts are truly *interesting* and may even be constitutive for vital public space in the city; one however, should not neglect the socio-economic divisions that Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005) have talked about, which are constitutive for conflicts. These divisions are indeed spatialised and reproduced much too often by urban experts, planners and more. As I understand it, the 'lets-hold-hands' (some of us at least),[158] and affirmative radical urbanism of Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005) may be less 'positivistic' than Lehtovuori's (2005, p. 270) hopeful and well-meant conclusion that experience and conflict are the two sides of active people's lives.[159]

Magical Urbanism

For their radical urban politics, Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005) referred to Lefebvre's work as well as to Davis' (2000) *Magical Urbanism*. Magical urbanism describes the revolutionary every-day practices of Latinos in US cities, and it echoes Lefebvre's(2003) [1970] *Urban Revolution*. Only this time, Davis presents an unofficial history, one experienced and contested but still to be acknowledged. Davis' perspective, though partial, presents us with a radical urbanism, grass-rooted and revolutionary in its tenacity, however slow.[160] The urbanism described by Davis (2000) is a nightmare for any bureaucratic capitalism, from the Scandinavian welfare states to the liberal southern European. At many instances while reading *magical urbanism* I realised the commonality of the sufferings of Latinos in the US, Albanians in Greece, and Somalis in Finland, among other marginalised groups, and despite the specificities and differences among these sufferings. The realisation that, especially in the case of Omonia Square and the Albanian immigrants, conservative politics in the US have

158 And following the models of radical planner and deliberative practitioner, proposed respectively by Sandercock (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003) and Forester (2000).

159 As positivism is a widely used and abused term I feel I must try to explain what I mean with the use of the adjective 'positivistic.' For this brief justification of the use of the term I turn for help to Hoggart, Lees & Davies (2002, p. 4-18). According to them positivism, in research methodologies, involves among other things, a direct, immediate and empirical experience of the world, and searching for universal knowledge with a more liberal political orientation. This definition may sound too abstract, however to my understanding Lehtovuori's (2005) conflict is specific concerning the way and place it is experienced, and it is additionally the other side of experience in active people's

lives (reminding us of Arendt's Vita Activa). However, social divisions do play a major role in urban conflicts. Planners and urban policy makers should embrace the potentialities for public discourse on urban regeneration which conflicts offer. This way, though, planners' contribution in the fertilisation of socio-economic divisions seems to be disregarded in favour of the potential for new urban forms. This is my modest critique on Lehtovuori's (2005) work; for all my hesitations I admire his persistence to design.

160 Davis (2000) is partial as he reproduces, it seems, the division of USA society into two opposing factions, the Latinos (people with Spanish surnames) and the whites; the African-American's role is cramped within already compact and tightly intertwined conflictive urban politics.

created the conditions for such an extensive and powerful urban politics of exploitation that are becoming more and more familiar in our welfarist (or liberal?) European context. Despite that, it is common in European academic discourse to highlight the differences between the European and US models of governance, citizens' rights, and market economy.[161] Davis, through his account of the Latino populations in the US with their increasing demands for humane livelihoods with better opportunities in education, labour market, health care and politics, demands a stronger and more creative and insurgent trade unionism.

Athens, 2003. Metaksurgio area. The building looked disserted; however it was housing immigrants. After I made this picture the shutters closed.

"[…] labor militancy is the only viable moral alternative to poverty-driven explosions of rage and frustration like the 1992 Rodney King riots." (Davis 2000, p.149)

The French riots and massive demonstrations in 2005 proved once more that European policy makers are following the trend of projecting the hegemony of market economy as inevitable.[162] People protest, violently at times; Davis sees labour militancy as a solution for a less destructive and more constructive way to oppose top-down decisions. Of course labour militancy can have many faces, peaceful as well as more forceful; the point is that Davis, to my understanding is talking about the expression and celebration of a Latino public face in the US. I intend to elaborate briefly on Davis' ideas, despite how different in context and scale his examples are from mine.

Given a rising population of Spanish surnames in the US – in certain cities like LA they are already the majority population – their underepresentation is extraordinary, Davis (2000) tells us. Their public face, though, is becoming more and more evident, to the apprehension of the white conservative elites. Davis tells us that Latinos and whites are not competing for the same faction of the labour market, so the myth that Latinos are stealing the jobs of other Americans is just that, a myth. The same beliefs are cultivated in Greece against immigrants who *burden* the local economy, in spite of that it is often the local economy that burdens them

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161 I am referring here to discussions held among participants of various disciplines at the Urbino Summer School (RTN-UrbEurope) in July/August 2003. The theme of the school was social exclusion in the cities.

162 See the EU recommendations to wine-makers and the way it has been presented now and then, through 2006, on BBC World News.

Barcelona, 2003. Barceloneta.

Barcelona, 2003. Barceloneta.

with very unfavourable terms of employment. Therefore the issues raised by the growing Latino population have largely to do with the future economic prospects of North-American society and an increasing Latino representation in the public sphere of urban centres, as it is there that Latinos mainly tend to concentrate.

> "Latinos are bringing redemptive energies to the neglected, worn-out cores and in- ner suburbs of many metropolitan areas. The process is most vivid in cities [...]. Yet today, even in the historically poorest census tracts, […] there is not a street that has not been dramatically brightened by new immigrants. Tired, sad little homes undergo miraculous revivifications: their peeling facades repainted, sagging roofs and porches rebuilt, and yellowing lawns replanted in cacti and azaleas." (Davis 2000, p.51-2)[163]

Davis explains how the legal and regulatory system does its best to hinder and even crimi- nalise the attempts of Latinos to build vibrant neighbourhoods. And not surprisingly, as the legal loopholes allow for the white supremacist hegemony to take revenge and punish the arrogant servants (one might say that history is repeating itself, where the African-Americans are replaced with Latinos). Urban space and the function of public space is often the epicentre of punitive actions targeting Latino everyday-life practices in the American city.

> "The bitterest struggles, however, have arisen over street-vending and street corner labor markets. Unlike Latin American or Caribbean cities, the North American me- tropolis preserves no traditional juridical or physical space for the survival economy of the poor (witness the shameful way that the homeless have been pushed to the wall). As a result, staggering law enforcement resources have been wasted in New York and Los Angeles in cruel harassment of the vendors who refresh streetcorners (often to the delight of gringo commuters) with their sale of *paletas*, *champurrado* and *tamales*." (Davis 2000, p.53)

We see here once more that ethnic food is a good indicator of a hunger for exotic tastes and good society, but not necessarily for a multicultural society; melting-pot or salad-bowl style, as we have seen earlier with Goonewardena & Kipfer (2005).

> "Inter-cultural skirmishes also take place on purely audio-visual fronts. Neighbor- hood aesthetic wars have become commonplace as Latino carnivality collides with

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163 It is not a coincidence that Albanians, too, occupy the poorest housing stock in Greece, most often bring- ing back into life long uninhabited or very poorly condi- tioned houses. Just next to my family home there is an old single storey house with a back garden. The basement of this house is rented to an extended family of Albanians, while the house on the street level remains most of the time uninhabited.

the psychosexual anxieties of Truman Show white residential culture. Thus the glorious sorbet palette of Mexican and Caribbean house paint –*verde limón, rosa mexicano, azul añil, morado*– is perceived as sheer visual terrorism by non-Hispanic homeowners who believe that their equity directly depends upon a neighbourhood color order of subdued pastels and white picket fences. […] In the most fundamental sense, the Latinos are struggling to reconfigure the 'cold' frozen geometries of the old spatial order to accommodate a 'hotter,' more exuberant urbanism. Across the vast pan-American range of cultural nuance, the social reproduction of *latinidad*, however defined, presupposes a rich proliferation of public space. The most intensive and creative convergence of Ibero-Mediterranean and Meso-American cultures is precisely their shared conviction that civilized sociality is constituted in the daily intercourse of the plaza and Mercado. […] Latin American immigrants and their children, perhaps more than any other element in the population, exult in playgrounds, parks, squares, libraries and other endangered species of US public space, and thus form one of the most important constituencies for the preservation of our urban commons." (Davis 2000, p.54-55)

This is how magical urbanism is described by Davis (2000), while he doesn't refer to magical urbanism as such even once in his book. He is referring clearly to a grassroots urbanism that has nothing to do with mainstream planning, architectural theory or policies; in fact these three seem to contradict the imaginative, insurgent urbanism of Latinos. It can be argued that similar top-down and aestheticised policies want to see both Omonia Square and the Helsinki Railway Station cleaned up. What is the point of *magical urbanism*? Davis isn't at all explicit, as to the use of the adjective *magical*. Still, the insurgent transformative power of this sort of radical urbanism from the grassroots seems almost magical, especially to us experts who may try to analyse, explain, or even artificially recreate it as a dynamic temporal experience of aestheticised poverty, voicelessness, and marginalisation. On the other hand, seeing and acknowledging in insurgent urbanisms the potential for a city's continuum may eventually lead experts, planners, policy makers, and designers to seek out and accept new and surprising alliances for a humane city everyone can live in.

"While there is much abstract talk in planning and architectural schools about the need to 'reurbanize' American cities, there is little recognition that Latino and Asian immigrants are already doing so on an epic scale. Perhaps the time is ripe (as Latinos locally move from minority to majority politics) to tropicalize the national vision of 'the city on the hill' [the elite's enclaves of wealth and selfsegragation along of course their Latino maids, caretakers, gardeners, and nannies]."(Davis 2000, p.57)

Athens, 2002. Omonia Square. In front of the historic café-restaurant NEON. A favourite meeting point.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Hunting for a job early in the morning in front of NEON.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Waiting for a job early in the morning in front of NEON.

3.6 HETEROTOPIA

Omonia is a territory free to be appropriated by the *visitor*. In the evenings and late hours, when the daily commercial and bureaucratic functions stop, the hotels, the restaurants and cafés, and the vacuum in the centre of the square cater to a different segment to the square's stake holders. Passers-by become less numerous in the square, and then the ambiguous face of Omonia evolves, almost magically. It is then that the *opportunists*, non-consumers, become more visible.[164] In order to eliminate the problem of this visibility the authorities resort to strategies such as policing, commercialisation, redesign, etc.

According to Lefebvre (1997), heterotopias are places of possibility, or liveability and opportunity, to use Lees' words. Lefebvre writes:

> "Once diversified, places opposed, sometimes complemented, and sometimes resembled one another. They can thus be categorised or subjected to a grid on the basis of 'topias' (isotopias, heterotopias, utopias, or in other words analogous places, contrasting places, and the places of what has no place, or no longer has a place- the absolute, the divine, or the possible). More importantly, such places can also be viewed in terms of the highly significant distinction between *dominated* spaces and *appropriated* spaces." (Lefebvre 1997, p.163-4)

Later in his *Production of Space*, Lefebvre speaks of "*heterotopias* as mutually repellent spaces" (1997, p.365-6). I would like to draw attention at the *possibility* present in heterotopias, which are not necessarily fixed and strictly demarcated spaces. Interpreting Lefebvre, Omonia Square has a heterotopic character: it is a monumental space with historic importance and produced by the imperative of state authority. In addition, contestations take place in Omonia as to what is and is not allowed within it. Most notably, Omonia Square can turn, even in the course of 24 hours, from a "full space" into a "heterotopic void," to use Lefebvrean terms, and indeed the ambiguity of Omonia owes a lot to its heterotopic character.[165] Unlike the heterotopic diversity applied in Portland's Downtown, which emerged through decisions of the city, Omonia's redesigned the formal agenda and Omonia's redesign aimed, it seems, at the elimination of its heterotopic character. It is rather an alleged communitarianism that the new Omonia should serve, the needs of the Athenian middle-class being the yardstick of its new social profile.

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164 I refer to a concept in my master's thesis that made sense in 1998 and could still be applied today. The concept refers to users and opportunists, who are both stake holders of public space, however with different objectives. The Baudelairean flâneur could be considered as an opportunist. The presence of users and opportunists, I claim, is central against state policies of suppression of dissent in the city. Once again accepting diverse behavioural patterns of stake-holders in public space brings about the question that Lees also discusses, namely who decides what is acceptable and good in public space.

"With its emphasis on functional and economic diversification and multicultural diversity, postmodern planning has sought to juxtapose different residential, commercial and leisure users and uses of urban space in new hetero-spaces. In so doing, however, it has given greater scope for debate about what differences communities should tolerate in these new hetero-spaces. Those debates have highlighted a second, closely related contradiction is postmodern planning discourse between the promotion of diversity as an end in itself and as merely a means of attaining the higher goal of economic development." (Lees 2003, p. 623)

And

"In the new hetero-spaces of downtown Portland, profitable bars and nightclubs have attracted college kids and young hipsters whose noise has offended nearby residential occupants. Likewise, the daytime behaviour of youths-skateboarding and hanging out in front of stores-has disturbed residents and shopkeepers concerned the Old Port might be gaining a reputation as a 'combat zone.' Such conflicts were suppressed by the functional and spatial segregation of the modern city, in which alternative activities and social groups were kept apart in the interests of social order and economic efficiency. By contrast, diversity has now become the organizing principle of the postmodern city, and paradoxically the proliferation of these more diverse hetero-spaces has given rise to more public debate about the meaning, limits, value and purposes of diversity in the city." (Lees 2003, p.623-4)

Interpreting Lees, Greek planning seems to be struggling its way out of modernism, to which it is still attached. Spatial segregation is evident in downtown Athens; especially in the area around Omonia, where Greek residents are scarce.[166] Due to the ambivalence of the area and the poor environmental conditions (air pollution, lack of proper housing conditions, the clandestine allure of the area, the heavy traffic in the daytime, etc.) available housing in the neighbourhood around the square provides the affordable temporary dwellings necessary for immigrants, legal and illegal. Psimmenos (2004) even locates hide outs for criminal activities such as prostitution in the wider area of Omonia, and even next to government buildings (Psimmenos 2004, p.197).

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165 "[...] monumental space. Such space is determined by what may take place there, and consequently by what may not take place there (prescribed/proscribed, scene/obscene). What appears empty may turn out to be full [...]. Alternatively, full space may be inverted over an almost heterotopic void at the same location (for instance, vaults, cupolas)." (Lefebvre 1997, p.224)

166 "The centre of Athens has been generally abandoned from the middle class long before the immigrant influx. There is evidence that many areas of the centre, like Plaka and Thisio, attract higher income holders after been redeveloped and gentrified." (Karidis 1996, p.170-1)

Athens, 2002. Metaksurgio area.

Athens, 2003. Metaksurgio area. A renovated neoclassical building.

Athens, 2002. Plaka area next to Acropolis.

Athens Gentrified

In an interview about Athens, public space and its contestations, and on the presence of immigrants in the city, the ex-Mayor of Athens Ntora Mpakoyianni advocated the acceptance of elements of immigrants' identities, and a process of making them ours.

> "The first thing that needs to be done is to draw attention to the elements of this cultural identity that have a great deal in common with our own perceptions. What we need most of all is acceptance […]" (Panayiotakou 2003, p.47)

The case of the recent redesign of Omonia Square exemplifies how a theoretical consensus on coping with the 'Other' proves explosive in practice, when certain stigmatised and stigmatising groups simply should be pushed away.[167] Can design change the existing social face of space? In the Greek context some would be understandably hesitant to say so, especially when the social agenda is covered. This may furthermore explain designers' feeling of inability to facilitate a multilevel diversity in planning and design.[168] Lees (2003), however, shows differently. She explains in detail how in the 1990's the City of Portland drafted a policy that recognised diversity as an element of the city, and how this policy, when translated into practice at the level of planning, then surfaced conflicts that needed first to be articulated and then negotiated.

It is apparent that we are dealing with dissimilar situations. In Athens there was a vague agenda for the redesign of Omonia, and as the architect O said in our discussion, the political dimension of space is rarely brought up by architects in various competitions.[169] In agreement with this, N stated that the discourse on social issues is very limited, almost non-existent, in Greek design circles. As an example s/he mentioned the new Omonia Square and its degeneration as a result of gentrification and social engineering.[170] The gentrification process in Athens is carried out by some centrally positioned experts, official actors, some residents' associations, and by real estate, construction and banking capital; they are altering radically the character of the city centre. There is the belief that this gentrification will lead to the creation of a sterile touristy entertainment space, normalising the commercialisation and privatisation of public space and time, while of course it will push out Greek and immigrant low income earners (Konstantatos 2001, p.19).

In Greece the state authorities, along with urban policy makers and planners, long for an alleged authenticity of traditional Athenian neighbourhood milieu, while disregarding the actual needs of all the inhabitants of the city-centre. An example of the above is the standards

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167 Discussion 14 (Athens, 16.10.2003), with Q a Greek architect.

168 We will se later some of the ideas of Holston (1998) and Harvey (1992) on this issue.

169 Discussion No12 (Athens, 14.10.2003), with O a Greek architect working for the Greek Ministry of Culture.

170 Discussion No11 (Athens, 13.10.2003), with N an academic at National Technical University

set by the Municipality of Athens when assigning the projects for the regeneration of the centre of the capital that has taken place within the last two decades. It was obvious that they would approve a recreation of a nostalgic neighbourhood feeling in areas like Metaksurgio and Psiris, focusing at the physical, architectonic, characteristics of the environment that were considered neglected and surrounded by incompatible uses (Konstantatos 2001, p.7).

Omonia Gentrified

Gentrification has been in the last few years one of the most talked about processes of bringing the middle-class into an area, not only as gentrifiers/tax payers but also as visitors and, most of all, as consumers (Lees 2003, p.614). Gentrification is an umbrella concept sheltering and providing alibi for many injustices taking place in the urban space. In Portland it meant the institutionalisation of diversity. Gentrification may partly describe the case of Omonia Square as a space of ambivalence. The population occupying the square varies during the course of a day, a week and a season: Greeks and immigrants of various middle-to-lower incomes, and an increasing presence of gentrifiers wanting to get advantage of the new shopping amenities available in the square, and to enjoy or exploit the diversity of the crowd. In the summer the stake holders of the square are again Greeks and immigrants, as well as

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Hondos department store.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Where the historic Mpakakos used to be, now stands one of Athens' many ZARA boutiques.

tourists, some staying at budget hotels around and off of Omonia, others attracted by the ambiguity and *richness* of the space, and some lost. In the non-working hours when the offices, department stores and shops are closed, the mixed crowds of the day-time become less diverse. The gentrifiers for one thing decrease, as well as those Greeks who don't *have* to be in the area, the *users* as I call them; on the other hand the marginalised 'Other' becomes more visible. I am not sure that they increase in number though; they are left, it seems, with a square that the Athenian middle-class proper avoids. The cafés and hotel bars around the square, as well as the fast-food restaurants, the kiosks, the cement square, without any features the designers were dreaming would arouse the interest of the citizens, attract people of lower incomes and among them a majority of immigrants. Drug users are at this time more vulnerable and visible, and prostitution becomes more evident too. In the day time, junkies bump into each other as well as into other busy people in the crowd. Often they are looked upon with pity or disapproval, depending if they are asking for money or if they are stoned with an empty look and eyes lowered to the ground. The same applies for the homeless who circulate in the area, ragged, some pariahs in their families, some with alcohol or other addictions, some mentally challenged. These, whom a communitarian perspective would consider as people in need of help and solidarity, become a fearful flock. It goes without saying that the presence of children in the square is always minimal. This square is not a "place to play" (Eisinger 2000, p. 316-7 cited in Lees 2003, p.620).

> "Where the use of geographic space ends for the citizens of Athens, is where it starts for the immigrants, thus creating two poles of life in the centre of Athens. One is based on the relation between the individual and society, while the other pole is based on the exclusionary relation between an individual and the society where s/he lives. A violent line separates these two poles, where the immigrant today is part of the large minority of people living outside of society." (Psimmenos 2004, p.156)

I am not certain about the bipolarity of Athens' centre. I believe that the geographical borders are more fluid and relational, although hindered by the 'grids' of power and imposed redevelopments. The redevelopment of Omonia is being basically market led, with com-

mercialisation being the major force of regeneration. The redesign of the square was initiated by the state in a process of beautification focusing on Athens' centre, especially before the Olympic Games of 2004. And, as Lees writes in regard to the urban redevelopment of Portland:

> "That dependence on the market creates other conflicts but they are not organized spatially in terms of resident versus visitor, as Eisinger (2000) implies. Instead, conflicts over the arts- and entertainment-led [commercialised in the case of Omonia Square] redevelopment of Portland have reflected class, age and identity divisions within the city that have been expressed through conflicts over competing conceptions of public space and the public good and the most appropriate means of achieving those ends." (Lees 2003, p.621)

According to Orfanou (2001, p.51), the decision-makers of the renewed urban centre of Athens may motivate the sprawl of the leisure industry and retail, but seem reluctant to recognise the presence and the traces of foreigners on the terrain of urban renewal. Smartened up, Omonia Square is a lived space and time will show how different stakeholders will appropriate it, and how the peripheral commercialisation will affect the uses of the public square itself. It is possible that retailers and fast food chains might sooner accomplish what the state has been trying to realise, and what the redesign before the Olympics provided a justification for, namely the gentrification of Omonia. In this display of power, the media are playing a fundamental role and basically support the authorities' narrow focus on profit.

Justice

If the1998 announcement of the international architectural competition for the redesign of Omonia Square would have expressed concerns about the social composition of Omonia and set goals for a more *just* diversification of the area, it would have endorsed a kind of diversity politics that eventually manifested later on when the authorities and their mediated voice blamed the redesign of the Square for not changing its social profile. The key word I see here is *justice*. David Harvey, (1992) in his brief analysis of justice in planning and policy-making expands on concepts by Young (1990). He presents six points (I put them in a list format) which, while they shouldn't be considered a checklist for just planning and policy-making, nevertheless if taken into consideration could intrigue our imagination for possible futures.[171]

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[171] The six points by Harvey were published in 1992 and may seem naive concerning our times characterised by sever more widespread violence. Nevertheless, each and every point may stand as a policy principle for better cities.

"[…] just planning and policy practices must confront directly the problem of creating forms of social and political organization and systems of production and consumption which minimize the exploitation of labour power both in the workplace and the living place.

[…] just planning and policy practices must confront the phenomenon of marginalization in a non-paternalistic mode and find ways to organize and militate within politics of marginalization in such a way as to liberate captive groups from this distinctive form of oppression.

[…] just planning and policy practices must empower rather than deprive the oppressed of access to political power and the ability to engage in self-expression.

[…] just planning and policy practices must be, particularly sensitive to issues of cultural imperialism and seek, by a variety of means, to eliminate the imperialist attitude both in the design of urban projects and modes of popular consultation.

[…] just planning and policy practices must seek out non-exclusionary and non-militarized forms of social control to contain the increasing levels of both personal and institutionalized violence without destroying capacities for empowerment and self-expression.

[…] just planning and policy practices will clearly recognize that the necessary ecological consequences of all social projects have impacts on future generations as well as upon distant peoples and take steps to ensure a reasonable mitigation of negative impacts." (Harvey 1992, p.598-600)

Just Experts or Just Experts

At instances, Harvey seems to rely too much on rationality and profound understanding of the local and supralocal, in a way with which I disagree, the notion too easily translates into some version of the super-hero planner or policy maker. However, Harvey's effort is still more agreeable than Sandercock's (1998a, 1998b) "radical planner." Sandercock writes:

"Working in and with such mobilized communities, planners' role are not the heroic ones described in the rational model. Rather, working for social transformation in community-based organizations, planners acknowledge that theory and practice become everyone's concern and that responsibilities for both are multiple and over-

lapping. Planners bring to radical practice general and specific/substantive skills: everything from skills of analysis and synthesis to grantsmanship, communication and the managing of group processes, as well as specific knowledge of labor markets or environmental law or transportation modelling or housing regulations." (Sandercock 1998b, p. 177).

I believe that planners cannot be a lot more heroic than the ones Sandercock describes above, even if she considers them less heroic than the rational planners of the 50s and 60s, with their knowledge, expertise,

"[…] and objectivity to do the best for 'the public.'"(Sandercock 1998b, p.170)

Harvey places moral weight on the planners and policy makers, similarly to Lees' (2003) hesitation concening the *trust* required for open deliberations on diversity between stake holders. She shows how the latter may feel or actually be patronised by experts, as to what is public good. Considering the fear of violence that has been effectively cultivated amongst urbanites, trust is an aspect of interpersonal communication that is largely absent in urban settings. It is certainly lacking in the Greek context, in a pervasive sense of distrust towards the 'Other', the foreigner, the non-Greek and the one who is not able to be Greek.[172] Imagining possible futures for our diversified cities with justice as a compass could empower experts to accept and work with something that many thinkers, from Young, to Frazer, to Harvey, would agree with; the ambivalence of the city.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Police checking the documents in front of the kiosk with the Albanian newspapers.

[172] "The social psychology of latent racism is unveiled in the case of the Roma people/Greek citizens, who are stereotypically represented in satirical theatre and comical television programs as dirty, illiterate and non-Greek, sly and crooks, without family and other moral values." (Karidis 1996, p.119)

"In this way urban policy might try to accommodate more clearly the diversity of diversities downtown. It would also force urban planners, amongst others, to think more clearly about the rhetoric of diversity that they use […]" (Lees 2003, p. 631)

And

"Ambivalence may seem dangerously ephemeral and lacking in theoretical rigour, but I hope that I have demonstrated otherwise. For I believe, following Donald (1995: 92), that a 'sensitivity to this ambivalence of the city may prefigure a new urban imagination.'"
(Lees 2003, p.631-2)

Holston (1998), linking architecture and planning with ethnography, wants to ground experts' imagination

"[…] in the heterogeneity of lived experience, which is to say, in the ethnographic present and not in utopian futures." (Holston 1998, p.53)

In this research I try to follow Holston's encouragement in a hybrid and evocative way.

3.7 IDENTITIES

Albanians concentrate many characteristics that register them threatening in the Greek consciousness: they trespassed Greek national borders in large numbers during difficult times for their own country, and many seriously endangered their lives in doing so. Albania itself was a closed state with very few relations to any of the neighbouring countries including Greece. As Kretsi (2002) has shown, the complexity of the Albanian-Greek relationship has been indicative of the troubled Balkan identity politics, along with the intense involvement of international diplomacy.[173]

"Moreover, the revitalization of the past [historic and land disputes between Chams – an Albanian-speaking, Muslim minority that used to live in the North of Greece – and Greeks] cannot be understood without the current migratory interdependence with Greece. Largely the claims [financial compensations for Chams' land expropriations, as well as claims for visas and work permits by Chams' descendants] on the local level of former inhabitants give evidence that Cham history and identity

[173] Kretsi, G. (2002). The 'Secret' Past of the Greek-Albanian Borderlands. Cham Muslim Albanian: Perspectives on a Conflict over Historical Accountability and Current Rights. *Ethnologica Balkanica*. Vol. 6(2002), pp. 171-195.

gradually attains more importance as it reflects social re-orientations towards Greece and the West as destinations of migrations." (Kretsi 2002, p.190)

The mutual 'Othering' of Albanians and Greeks has deep and subconscious roots. It is believed that Albanian society is male-dominated and quite conservative (Sirigou-Rigou 2000, p.19). This complies with the stereotypical opinion about the backwardness of Albanians.

> "[Albanian immigrant women] continuously (have to) negotiate with their men survival strategies and patterns of everyday life under conditions of deprivation and stress, in which violence against women in the family, separation and divorce are common and indicate how men live with greater difficulty the conditions of dislocation, poverty and (real or imagined) destabilisation of gender power." (Vaiou 2002, p.383)

When crimes with Albanian offenders first began to be reported in the news, a public hysteria took place and ever since Albanians are ascribed most of the evil in the city.[174] N said that Albanians are discriminated against almost as if for their "skin colour." In the public's view, they are distinct because of their consentrations but also because of physical characteristics like the shape of the scull, their body proportions, their postures, and their clothing.[175] In this way, the public opinion has objectified Albanians en masse, avoiding looking at the individual. In the process of the criminalisation of Albanians in Greece, a large portion of the media has played a crucial role (Karidis 1996, p.123-9). Similarly:

> "[…] in Greece, the representation of Albanians in the ethnic press –in complete contradiction to the mainstream media representations- as hard working, as literary people and as a community proposes a self-identity that is denied by the majority of the population and the Greek polity." (Georgiou 2002, p.15)[176]

Nick Mai, on the other hand, provides us with an optimistic view of Albanian immigrants in their other more favourable destination, Italy. He shows that Albanians' migratory identities are under constant making.[177]

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[174] In a book of fiction *The paradise is Next Door*, the Albanian author Vasilis Ntilos (Ntilos 2003) describes the stories of a group of friends, illegally immigrating to Greece from Albania to do all kinds of jobs, earn money and return to their homes. In an anecdote, we hear that somewhere in a Greek village an elderly Greek woman, good hearted and naïve, pointed at some black men having a fight, and said to one of the Albanian characters of the book, "it's these Albanians my son who are responsible." She was referring to the alleged increase of criminality in Greece after the influx of Albanians.

[175] Discussion No11 (Athens, 13.10.2003), with N an academic at National Technical University.

[176] Georgiou, M. (2002). *Diasporic Media and the Construction of Ethnic and Multiethnic Publics. IAMCR Conference, July 2002, Barcelona*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.portalcomunicacion.com/bcn2002/n_eng/programme/prog_Ind /papers/g/pdf/g006se03_georg.pdf (Accessed: 6 January 2006).

[177] Mai, N. (2004). *'Looking for a More Modern Life… ': the Role of Italian Television in the Albanian Migration to Italy.*

"If it is true that in post-communist times Italian media ultimately corroborated a very disempowering and reductive understanding of Western late modernity, the post-post-communist release from the utopian sensibility shaping contemporary Albanian young people's migratory identities leaves some ground for optimism. Beyond their strive for individual self-fulfilment and their fascination with an hedonistic lifestyle free from the repressive and conservative aspects of Albanian culture, I read not merely the familiar expression of youthful opposition to traditionalism, but the emergence of a new social subject in Albania: namely, migratory youth. This is a subject which imagines different ways of being, different realities, different lives - whether physical displacement is actually carried out or not." (Mai 2004, p.20)

'Hellenismos'

Lefebvre & Regulier (1996), in their project on *Rhythmanalysis*, spoke of the ritual rather than contractual relations prevalent in the societies of southern Europe. This has been rather true for Greece and the identity building of Greek society, which has often made it more difficult for outsiders to be accepted as part of that society.

 "[…] most of the more popular cries for a reconstituted sense of civil society in the West stress […] this need to reassert a sense of community in the face of what is perceived as an individual devoid of communal referents. For the more the relations between individuals are defined by abstract, legalistic and formal criteria … the less the public realm can be defined by shared solidarity based on concrete ties and history, ideas, love, care and friendship. The irony here of course is that these abstract laws are oriented around nothing other than the preservation of the rights, liberties, and freedoms of the particular individual – whose interrelations are nevertheless lost in the web of formal rules and regulations." (Seligram 2000, p.21 as cited in Lees 2003, p.627)

Following the thought of Seligram, I see a paradox: the sense of community cultivated in Greece mainly concerns Greeks who share the rituals, pacts, and ties of 'Greekness' (Hellenismos in Greek), while the foreigner is heavily legalised, and even penalised as Karidis (1996) shows, depending on her/his nationality. This should also be seen in the EU, Western and even global context, witness the fortification of Europe and the US against certain outsiders, especially in the era of ruthless global capitalism and its sibling, terrorism.

Seligram's words make me think of the qualities of Hellenismos (of being Greek) backed up by a legalistic system that hinders intercultural communication. Hellenismos is also tightly intertwined with 'Orthodoxia,' the Greek Orthodox faith. Although the Modern Greek state appears reluctant to share political responsibilities with the heads of the Greek Church, civil society is prescribed by religious sentiments.

> "Religious practices in Greece are based on a solid combination of Greek and Orthodox Christian principles. School texts, national celebrations and songs, the inauguration of governmental buildings, important political meetings etc., are filtered with messages of faith and are almost invariably, blessed by priests." (Petronoti 1996, p.205)

And

> "[Eritrean refugees in Greece are Christian Copts] In their view, Greeks are unable to appreciate customs and practices beyond their own realm of activities, are blinded by adherence to the national cause and employ lifelong habits of stereotypical categorisation. For these reasons, Eritreans find it 'natural' and stay calm when people in the street call them 'Negroes' or stop to ask about their faith." (Petronoti 1996, p.195)

In Greece, as Petronoti (1996, p.197) has shown, the importance of philanthropy and charity within Greek society is a fundamental part of the religious traditions of Orthodoxia. These traditions and the way they are practiced often segregate more than bring together, by accentuating the cultural and religious or ethnic divides between natives and outsiders. The contrast between state and civil society grows to be more complicated in the Greek context with the strong presence of the institution of religion. A large number of Albanians, in order to make it in Greece, find it convenient if not imperative (depending on how one defines coercion in regard to disadvantaged immigrants) to become Orthodox Christians. This is indicative of the identity suppression administered at will, while an imposed identity homogenisation is impossible.[178] Omonia Square has been in the eye of the cyclone and the policies and decisions that influence its physical configuration should be seen in this context.

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[178] See Kasimati (2003), Nitsiakos (2003).

[179] I refer here to some of the discussions within Eurex 2003, and a discussion on 'Smartlands' by the Spanish architect and urban researcher Alberto Oto, at the Culture in Between Spaces Seminar at University of Art and Design Helsinki, on May 12th.2006.

Citizenship

"I suggest that the sources of this new imaginary [social imagination in planning and architectural theory] lie not in any specifically architectural or planning production of the city but rather in the development of theory in both fields as an investigation into what I call the spaces of insurgent citizenship-or insurgent spaces of citizenship[…]" (Holston 1998, p.39).

And

"These insurgent forms are found both in organized grassroots mobilizations and in everyday practices that, in different ways, empower, parody, derail, or subvert state agendas. They are found, in other words, in struggles over what it means to be a member of the modern state-which is why I refer to them with the term citizenship." (Holston 1998, p.47)

Does citizenship require a sense of community? Does public space require an accommodation of citizenship, and is this citizenship then the one imposed by state regulations and laws? Do foreigners, legal and illegal – in the case of Athens' immigrants – bring to the foreground a different citizenship that has to also be facilitated in public space?

"The enhanced salience of such phenomena as migrations, diasporas, dual citizenship arrangements, indigenous community membership, and patterns of multiple residency has made a mockery of the presupposition of a national citizenry, exclusive, sharply demarcated, and resistant on a national territory. Every state now has noncitizens on its territory and every nationality is territorially dispersed. Most states are de facto multicultural and/or multinational, even when they persist on denying it. Thus, nationality and citizenship do not coincide. If the subjects of public-sphere communication are fellow nationals and fellow citizens, then such communication can no longer serve its classic function of mobilizing those who constitute a 'community of fate' to assert democratic control over the powers that determine the basic conditions of their lives. Not only such powers reside elsewhere, but those affected by them do not constitute a political community." (Fraser 2002, p.10)

The renegotiation of citizenship is crucial for our perception of our cities, and public spaces are similarly renegotiated. Recently one of the main implications for such a discourse on urban policies has been cities' competition.[179] The antagonism among cities in the "hot" fields of culture and heritage (including picturesque urban settings), translates into capital investments and often has a clear nationalistic nuance. Cities' cultural images have to be

open and multi-vocal but nationally distinct. However, the creation of national culture as such and its spatial expressions exclude a priori minorities of any kind. Such policies in real life mean practically reducing the resources for immigrants to meet their different needs for public cultural expression of their citizenship. At the street level, however, where everyday life requires negotiating with the stranger, mixing and hybridisation are taking place as part of a process for urban survival (Konstantatos 2001, p.21).

Identities, Stereotypes and Place

"Places are important in the construction of social identities and are integral to identity politics in multiple ways. With respect to identity formation, places such as neighborhoods and communal places are symbols of identification and power relations. As such they reinforce community identities and power relations." (Nagar & Leitner 1998, p.230)

"[…]place-based struggles are simultaneously struggles for and negotiations over identity, social boundaries, and material reproduction and that the appropriation and control of space is central in this process." (Nagar & Leitner 1998, p.231)

"Different places and spaces, however, cannot be thought of as simple stages on which these processes are played out, because the appropriation of place and control over material space are in fact central pivots in struggles for and negotiations over identities, social boundaries, and material reproduction." (Nagar & Leitner 1998, p.245-6)

These points are crucial for our discussion. If what Nagar & Leitner tell us is true, then planning policies and design, as well as the managing of public spaces, are indeed contributing to the formation of social relations. Lefebvre has consistently argued about this too, in his own way. Ascribing such a power to space planners, architects and designers have to take a share of the responsibility for accommodating (shaping?) and sheltering social interactions. Design in practice is considered powerless when it comes to social change.[180] I believe that this idea expresses pessimism, especially when the radicalisation of urban phenomena catch us off guard. As I hope to demonstrate with my work, it is already the conception of design

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[180] Discussion No31 (Athens, 27.10.2004), with AH an architect working at the Office for public spaces in the Municipality of Athens. S/he said that design could never change the social profile of the square, and in fact the profile of Omonia changed very little after it was redesigned.

Likwise in discussion No35 (Athens, 2.11.2004), AJ, an academic at Panteio University, believed that design cannot change the social profile of a place.

that has to be updated and being meeting the demands for social change, while dealing with our fears concerning such changes.

As Nagar & Leitner (1998, p. 228) show, identities are not fixed, and they consist of the ways people perceive and understand themselves and their "social worlds." Our identities shape the meanings of our worlds and these in turn shape our behaviour as citizens. The idea of identity as something that is not fixed, but that shifts and changes, or develops as our social relationships change, may help in challenging, according to Nagar & Leitner, "binary oppositions" between men and women, or between Greeks and Albanians, for the sake of our discussion.

3.8 CRIMINALISING THE 'OTHER'

> "It is characteristic of a stereotypical image that the carrier [a Greek in our case] is generally unwilling to see the faultiness of that stereotype. This is further accentuated as the social distance between carriers of the stereotypes and the stigmatized group [Albanian immigrants] increases. The social marginalisation of such a group leads to an increase in the transgressive activities of group members, and therefore to the confirmation of the stereotype and stigma, as well as the legitimising of the social exclusion. This in turn triggers a commensurate response from the group. In this way, a vicious circle of negative social interaction is created, which leads to further marginalisation, more repression and intensifying anti-social behaviour. This dialectical process takes place in Greece in regard to all illegal immigrants and especially the Albanians. The "Albanian," in particular the Albanian offender, is not perceived or approached as an independent and autonomous individual with personal characteristics, but as member of a socially dangerous group with negative associations." (Karidis 1996, p.156-7)

The Greek authorities, with support of the mass media, have deprived Albanian immigrants of the potential for development by essentialising exaggerated negative elements – such as criminality – and by denying acknowledgement of their contribution to the Greek economy and society.[181] This may be one way in which the Greek state denies Albanians the prospect of considerably improving their position in Greek civil society.[182] Karidis (1996) has shown that the identity of Albanians in Greece has been shaped solely on the basis of

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[181] See also Davis (2000) regarding the widespread underestimation of Latinos' contribution in the US, as well as their multilevel marginalisation.

[182] "Personally I am disturbed that recently Albanian children were carrying the Greek flag at school parades,

they pretend to be nice to the teachers and this occasionally creates serious problems." [From an interview with a Greek, sixteen years old senior-high school student.] (Trapeziotis 2004, p. 61)
The tradition is that the best students get to curry the Greek flag at school parades.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Evening hours gathering around the kiosk with the Albanian newspapers.

Athens, 2006. Omonia Square. Reading Albanian newspapers.

their criminalised ethnicity, due to the violent crimes committed by young male Albanian offenders. This kind of identification contributes to a vicious circle where on the one hand Albanians are 'Othered' by Greeks, while they see Greeks as their 'Other.' Furthermore, by internalising this identity, Albanians have been left with fewer opportunities to interact positively with Greeks in mutually respectful patterns.[183] This is a vicious circle affecting all levels of life and the power struggles between subordination and domination, and their spatial outlets.

> "Many people tend to fear stereotypical 'others' whose presence appears to threaten disorder to mainstream life and values (Sibley, 1995). In reality, the groups and places frequently demonised as a threat to law and order may themselves be at highest risk of violence and abuse of all, and so social 'others' such as children, young men, some ethnic groups, people who are homeless or have mental health problems may be simultaneously feared and fearful." (Pain 2001, p.902)

And

> "[…] it is inappropriate to deal with race, gender, age and other social identities simply as descriptive categories in analysis of the fear of crime. Rather, in each case, fear of crime (and the crimes feared) are often structured by age, race, and gender [...]. When gender, age and race are viewed as social relations which are based upon unequal distribution of power, they begin to explain who is most affected by fear, and where. Central to this argument is the consideration of ways in which these and other social identities intersect, so that male-female, black-white, old-young are not enough alone to predict people's position in relation to fear." (Pain 2001, p.910-11)

As Pain (2001) has shown, there is a great deal of exclusion facilitated by constructing a threatening identity for a group, and Karidis (1996) indicates the same concerning the criminalisation of Albanians, especially young men. Davis, all through his *Magical Urbanism*, unveils the inability of the North-American governance to support the inclusion of a marginal majority into the 'American dream.' He discloses, in both high policy and at the level of everyday all these practices of exclusion, marginalisation, stereotyping, and 'Othering'; he writes:

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183 "Legal status of immigrants and relations with public agencies and authorities are issues of significant concern for the research participants. Although the majority of our respondents hold a work and stay permit in the country, the constant interplay between legality and illegality is a common experience. According to immigrant's responses their relations with public agencies and authorities are uneasy. They stress the high cost of regularisation procedures and the extreme difficulties they face when contacting public agencies and the police in order to collect various documents necessary for the completion of the process." (Iosifides *et al.* 2006, p.101-2)

"Law enforcement groups have been among the most blatant ethnic stereotypers." (Davis 2000, p.75).

Having observed and read about Greek security staff in Omonia, and having read the code of contact for the security guards at Helsinki Railway Station, I am afraid Davis is right, and furthermore law enforcement groups are the most blatant stereotypers in general. The fact that Davis highlights the ethnic aspect of stereotyping has more to do with the criminalisation of ethnic markers, as they are seen to indicate more and more potentiality for crime. As N said Albanians in Greece are seen as having racial markers,[184] and the most trained experts in these markers are probably the people who are supposed to be working with them, the Greek law enforcement groups.

Constructing the Albanian Villain

Albanians in Athens, and in Greece at large, have for years been denied the right to be members of civil society, and the role of the state's policies and legislation in this has been paramount. In the places they have shared in urban space, they have had to be invisible in order not to attract the attention of locals; their appropriation of space has been mainly through their presence and language; however, the stigma Albanians carry is attributed to them most of all by their criminalisation.[185]

"In the spaces of Athens' centre, the research showed that the immigrant moves differently from the rest of the citizens, limiting his life within "dead" spaces and using his surrounding environment and public spaces differently." (Psimmenos 2004, p.230)

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[184] Discussion No11 (Athens, 13.10.2003), with N an academic at National Technical University.

[185] "The violent criminality, and the disproportional fear the average citizen feels for it, constitutes a fundamental element concerning the social "profile" of the Albanian immigrant. In addition the televised news reports and especially the sensationalistic presentations of relevant incidents, dilate the impression that such criminality is in a constant increase. This way the citizens' feelings of insecurity are on the rise. The social psychology of citizens as well as their consequent behaviour indicates that the fear of crime may cause changes in routines, especially in the use of public spaces, in the leisure activities outside home, and even bring about an interchange between the roles of the potential perpetrator and the imagined potential victim." (Karidis 1996, p. 158-9).

"In an empirical survey published in 1992, among a small sample of illegal immigrants, 80% of who were Albanians revealed that the fear of victimisation possesses the immigrant community as well. They return home early, take many precautions, don't circulate a lot, are careful with their meetings and associations, and carry a weapon for defence." (Karidis 1996, p.159)
On this issue Orfanou (2001, p. 45) presents a different perspective: "None of the immigrants [other than Albanians], expressed any special fear for her/his safety in Athens, except for isolated cases. Some times they are referring to Albanians just like Greeks do when talking about the Albanian community: '...Albanians are not like us, many are criminals, it's on the television every day....'"

Omonia's alleged albanisation was perceived as such due to the *overwhelming* presence of Albanians, while their own hungouts and cafes in Omonia are today still few, and mainly not on the square but in the streets around it and in other areas of Athens.[186] Psimmenos (2005) describes a *discrete* and *clandestine* presence at least at the early stages of Albanian immigration in Athens. It is possible that the fear of stirring up the menace of Greeks was a main motive for Albanians to keep a low profile; something that so far hasn't changed dramatically under the watchful eye of the police and right and far right-wing nationalists. Interpreting Karidis (1996), we understand that the instigated fear of crime, which many Athenians feel may be the cause for the stigmatisation of Omonia today, may involve more than the presence of Albanians. Natives view this fear as their exclusive burden, disregarding the fear of victimisation experienced by the Albanian immigrants themselves. Psimmenos (2004) researched the socio-spatial exclusion experienced by Albanian immigrants between 1992-3, the period of their influx. His work has been a valuable resource for information, insights and reflections concerning the social space of Omonia. His analysis helped me understand why Omonia has been stigmatised, while at the same time the stigmatised and stigmatising people, the Albanians, suffered an extraordinary dehumanisation.

Albanisation

"In the course of this research [1991-1993], it became evident that the world of immigration, right from their shelters to the coffee shops and the cramped public squares, had begun a process of organizing space, which many referred to as the 'albanianisation' of space." (Psimmenos 2004, p.177)

The presence of Albanians has been a serious obstacle for the change of image in Omonia Square.

"In the course of the research the transformation of the areas of Vathi and Omonia into receiving centres for Albanians was evident. Aside from the overconcentration of Albanians in these areas, we have everywhere had elements reminding the passer-by that this immigrating population is settling in Athens. From the coffee shops to the travel agencies and kiosks, there were elements reminding the passing Athenian that s/he was the foreigner in this area. Bus schedules, Albanian newspapers, illegal betting, passports, cultural centres for young Albanians, everything started to adjust

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[186] Discussion No32 (Athens, 27.10.2004), with AI a member of the Greek minority in South Albania. AI took me to one of those cafés.

to the national and cultural particularities of immigrants. An Albanian immigrant specifically said: '[…] The only thing that keeps me here is the hope that one day the citizens will understand that we too are humans […]'" (Psimmenos 2004, p. 162)

However terrible the conditions have been for Albanians in Omonia, the square and the neighbouring area has been their place too, and the importance of *such* a place Nagar & Leitner (1998) explain in their work concerning Asians living in Dar es Salaam. They show that the localities of particular groups support their identity formation as well as defining the power relations between these groups and the society at large. Such places, mostly of public character, are furthermore

> "[…] important sites of struggle and negotiation over identities and over relations of domination and subordination, inclusion and exclusion, privilege and deprivation, both among and within different social groups." (Nagar & Leitner 1998, p.227)

The Albanian character of Omonia is not comprehensive; it is rather symbolic and exaggerated by the media and by state and private interests as a means to inflate nationalistic or bourgeois drives to enhance the financial profitability of the area; pretty much as Lees (2003) has shown in her case of Portland concerning the marginalisation of youth.

Forging Identities

In the August 2004 (the month of the Olympic Games in Athens) issue of a Greek life-style magazine, there was an article about Athens entitle "My City." Within it the writer clearly stated that one of the places she avoids is the "Tirana Square" (Tirana is the capital of Albania), "as Omonia Square is currently known" (Makri 2004, p.17). The readers of this article received a confirmation of the dangerous Albanisation of Omonia Square, the one that prevents the author from visiting Omonia. In an earlier article for 2003, we get a good impression of how one part of the media discourse was moulded in Greece after the opening of the redesigned Omonia. In this long excerpt from the article we read:

> "Let's tke the example of Omonia: the people who have been slumped there, the worn-out human residue, reflect all of us along those who walk hastily in the pe-riphery of the square. The central square of the city is a garbage can… It is not the fault of architecture, the spatial organisation, or the concept. Nothing. It is just that now that the square has been given to the inhabitants of the city, it has become clear that there are no inhabitants and no city… Or better, the inhabitants as well as the city have changed dramatically, while the square was renovated regardless of these

changes, so when it was finally finished it was delivered altogether to its beneficiaries: those who for years now have been forming their own colonies in the centre. Vathis Square, 3rd of September street, Sokratous Street, Omonia, the fringes of Haftia, Karolou Street, Stournari Street, they have all been colonised by half-alive junkies – it is as if these were pushed there by the city itself so that its wounds would be visible to all. As they live elsewhere, neither the architects, the managers, nor the politicians know of this colonisation, or of the colonisation of the whole of Athens by people of different descent, all those thousands of immigrants. When I hear about 'returning the city to its citizens,' about smartening up or regenerating facades, I smile bitterly. I am thinking that no 'traditional' Athenian will ever even see the regenerated facades, simply because no such person has existed for a long time now. The centre is inhabited by a small minority of Greeks, a few families, some youngsters, many ailing and old people, and flocks of immigrants crowded in underground one-room, or 2nd-floor three-room apartments. In the wretched historical neighbourhoods, Albanians, Poles, exhausted lower-class and fearful middle-class people are altogether degraded. Everything and everyone is oscillating towards an indifferent or unstable balance, towards entropy. The quasi-confined become equal in favour of those worse off. Normally the architects know nothing about this new city. They come with their PhDs from the big universities, with ideas about urban planning, with views on the transformation of neoclassical Athens into a contemporary metropolis. But they don't know anything about the human content of the city, and therefore about the city itself. Being unaware, however, they promote exactly this: they design postmodern melting-pots and deliver the city centre to its real inhabitants: the homeless, the refugees, the passers-by, the immigrants and the junkies. Ignorance, almost superior to art, leads to the real being. The politicians who plan the 'delivery of the city to the people' inhabit fenced suburbs with body-guards, moving interchangeably from a limo onto a thick carpet. The pulsating, dirty city is an exotic landscape they encounter at the movies. They [politicians] order pedestrianisations and bus-roads, they shuffle urban zones and lives like they were decorating their two-floor condominiums. They attend receptions and leave pleased. Soon after they have cut the opening ribbon, real life bursts in, filling in the cracks, appropriating, and deviating. The city is making up its wrinkles and vanity with soot. Life becomes self-regulated. When it [the city] gets jammed, it acquires another side-street. People keep flooding like rivers." (Xidakis 2003, p.98-99)

In Omonia square the present doesn't seem very soothing or able to heal older traumas, as the following event reveals. On the night of Saturday the 4th of September, 2004, after a football match between Albania and Greece, there were bloody clashes at Omonia Square between Albanians and Greeks including the police, who just wouldn't allow Albanians to

celebrate their team's victory in a *Greek* public space. It is important to notice, though, that Albanians' open protest against racist violence following the 4th of September 2004 incidents started at Omonia Square.

Omonia square is a public space of conflicts, even violent ones; the modern state wishes to eliminate destabilizing sources of conflict. Greek authorities have been trying to eradicate nuclei of potential conflicts. On the one hand they have failed, and on the other they have fueled more controversy among groups of stakeholders, essentially the 'Other,' by targeting them and not the laws and institutions that try to push them out of sight; much like the homeless people in the US, as Mitchell (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2005a, 2005b) describes. Omonia is still present, and everyone, including institutions, continues to use and abuse it. Despite all of this, Omonia's social space, transformed, lives on. Omonia is an example of public space where, as Hajer & Reijndorp (2001) suggest, different groups enter each other's public spheres. The Greek authorities try to order Omonia, the groups using it and the interactions taking place. As a matter of fact it could be said that the Greek state's polemic has been pointing against identities occupying Omonia and less against usages and their causes.

Omonia is an area that involves insurgencies that at times may bear the signs of Fraser's "subaltern counter publics" (Fraser 1992, p.122-4); places to which marginalized groups turn to express their voice. It seems to me that Greek decision-makers haven't been able to come to peace yet with these aspects of Omonia. Public space is not *frozen* history as conventional architectural theory would have it. Public spaces, as living social spaces, are means of continuous cultural transmission. What the authorities do by top-down regeneration and gentrification in living spaces, such as Omonia, is to mutate the transmission of the history of the place and interrupt its historical continuity. By eliminating the traces of a past from a redesigned space, the authorities objectify and eventually commodify it, preparing the ground for all sorts of urban renewals. However, wiping out the traces of a certain past doesn't necessarily eliminate the past itself.

PART FOUR
HELSINKI RAILWAY STATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Part four is dedicated to my case study of urban public space in Helsinki, my home since August 2001. Here I conducted my doctoral studies, and it has been the active everyday life context that worked as an inspirational springboard for all the questions and discussions in this body of work. Many questions about the urban public space of Athens that I discussed in the previous section were formulated while living and studying in Helsinki. Harold Garfinkel (1967, p.77-8),[187] in his pioneering work laying down the principles of ethnomethodology, suggests that field researchers of the everyday, when they cannot presuppose a knowledge of social structures, have to make decisions without being certain of making the right choices. This aligns with the many possibilities available for new approaches stemming from the unfamiliarity of the field itself. Inquiring into a new social context implies that the researcher is to a lesser degree bound by background expectancies and by its norms and fixities, everything constituting 'life as usual.' Garfinkel considers the 'rediscovery' of the commonplace to be of essential relevance to inquiries about society. To rediscover, for Garfinkel, means that while we inquire into the field we are not predisposed by the norms that regulate it, but instead are open to question any norm. As researcher, no doubt, we carry with us our predispositions from previous contexts and backgrounds; I believe, though, that according to the sincerity of interest researchers possess, they will be reflexive and aware of the self-doubting challenges posed by the new context, their inquiry into it, and the new discoveries.

> "The member of the society uses background expectancies as a scheme of interpretation. With their use actual appearances are for him recognizable and intelligible as the appearances of familiar events. Demonstrably he is responsive to this background, while at the same time he is at a loss to tell us specifically of what the expectancies consist. When we ask him about them ha has little or nothing to say.

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187 Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

For these background expectancies to come into view one must either be a stranger to the 'life as usual' character of everyday scenes, or become estranged from them." (Garfinkel 1967, p.36-37)

Helsinki Railway Station. Main hall, approx. 30s-40s. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Being and remaining an alien, in both Greece and Finland, has emancipated my view on the different cultures, histories, *savoirs-faire*, and on how these societies deal with the 'Other' in the city. Emancipation, here, lies not in objectivity – quite the contrary. I am talking about a critical position towards both my origin and my current home. A Mediterranean man, dark-looking and modestly built, I experienced full blast the "cold" city Helsinki is considered to be.[188] For me this has been an exciting place, and my discoveries here have provided me a lens through which the world around acquired a new humanity. This happened amidst realisations about difference and the fear of it; the fear we apparently all, more or less, sustain in our psyche about sharing the city space with many different people we don't know.

I will discuss extensively about these fears and how we currently tackle them. I would like to think of this discussion and accordingly conduct it as a sincere effort to contemplate on the ideas of scholars, my interlocutors and from my observations. The ideas of Sandercock (2003), as elaborated in her book *Cosmopolis II*, provide a fertile ground for this discussion to evolve. It is a largely inspiring book, dense in meanings and ideas, and rich in examples of alternative urbanism; however it is also disappointing, because although Sandercock seems to be aware of the bourgeois status of much of urban scholarship, she prefers not to address this or to consider herself in these terms. In this respect, Lefebvre is once more a resourceful writer of a past radicalism which is always relevant. The ideas of Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005) about the diversity as encountered, discussed, managed and lived in our cities, are important in reference to our discussion about urban fear of difference and policies for inclusive cities.

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[188] I refer to what Rob Shields' claims about Helsinki, as mentioned in Lehtovuori (2005, p.268).

My dialectic 'journey' will be enlightened by Hanna Snellman (2005) and her ethnographic perspective on Finnish migrants and on 'Finnishness.' I will use multiculturalism as described by Sandercock (2003), cautiously though due to the limitation it poses in promising more inclusive or just societies. Therefore, as alternatives to multiculturalism and its accent on culture,[189] I will often use the terms *inclusive, just* and *egalitarian*, acknowledging that culture is often one of the dividing lines used by our racialised narratives in dealing with socio-spatial issues. Other such dividing lines, what I call –isms, are for instance 'race,' 'class,' 'gender,' 'sexuality,' 'age,' 'ability,' and 'religion.' All these dividing lines have caused tremendous suffering to people and still do. *-Isms* have been all along social constructions, while we deal with them as essentialities. Somewhere along the way, as Sandercock implies, we must redefine the problem of *–isms* and avoid reproducing problems while trying to solve them. Focusing on culture to exorcise social divides is partial, though it may also be legitimate as long as we are aware of its partiality in a relational web of social divisions. Ethnomethodology, and the power of story-telling Sandercock demonstrates to be important means for opening up a dialogue and learning from the people around us. I have always considered myself to be a bad story teller; even so, in our discussions my interlocutors provided me with material, whose richness I still struggle to grasp. The compensation for these people for their time, openness, and willingness to help me understand, cannot be great. I hope that this work is worthy of their trust and that our discussions and encounters made a *fold* on their 'surface' (Galanakis & Oikarinen-Jabai 2006, p.67).

With this brief introduction I wish to 'show my cards' before starting this endeavour on socio-spatial diversity in Helsinki, and specifically right in the heart of the city; the Helsinki Railway Station. Why the station? Because, to my 'foreign' eyes the station is indeed the 'living room' of the city; as such it is also a social map for the city, in just the way that urban fears map our social insecurities.[190] I claim that Helsinki Railway Station is one of many spaces, though an indicative one, in a city where the fears of the 'Other' pervade all. This part prepares the ground for the next one on *Olohuone*. It sets the framework for my case study in Helsinki and the Helsinki Railway Station. Some of the issues I touch upon here I also revisit in the next part in the discussion about *Olohuone,* my installation at the West Hall of the station.

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189 On a conception of culture: "There is hope, moreover, among remaining urban middle classes and elites, that culture as a set of aesthetic social practices can offset the fear that pervades urban life. In their view, inflating the cultural role of institutions and events can restore civility to public culture. At least, cultural strategies of reconstructing the meaning of urban spaces give the appearance of a common public culture. Culture also has a political value. It offers a seemingly neutral language to maintain social hierarchy in a polarized society. These uses of culture create new tensions around cultural politics. Debates over historic preservation, subsidies to cultural institutions, and the uses of public space indicate how hard it is for culture to be both a democratic public good and an elite resource." (Zukin 1995, p270)

190 See Sandercock (2003, p.123)

Helsinki, 2003. Opposite the Helsinki Railway Station.

Fear and the City

The encounter with the stranger has always been a central argument for sharing the attraction or discontent of living in the city. Urbanites live in fear, from the fears of the stranger in the "vast" polis of Athens,[191] to the romantic Baudelairean flâneur, all the way to the crime preventive surveillance and identifying technologies, institutionalized in the public spaces of metropoles around the world.[192] There is logic in being cautious: the laws of rural living have long ago given place to the laws of urban survival. It is not only the fear for out physical well being and safety that we must be cautious about. Living with strangers, we are taught, is a tremendous emotional and psychological stress, while the bombardment of information – advertisements mostly – we learn it is essential to wall off.[193]

Therefore, asking a Finnish woman for information or directions, meant for me a warning "anteeksi" (excuse me) from as far as one and a half to two meters away, and then making my plea for information never approaching too close.[194] My point here is that we – urbanites in an increasingly urbanised world – are afraid of each other. This fear, according to Sandercock (2003), is inevitable as the one we fear is often within ourselves.

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[191] See Arendt (1998)[1958]; Cohen (2000). Cohen (2000, p.106) explains how in the fourth century B.C. the inability of Athens' inhabitants to know each other at a glance was thought of as a threat to the democratic polis; Aristotle feared that aliens and foreigners had better chances to elude their participation in politics in an overcrowded polis.

[192] On BBC World News, October 18th 2006, a reportage covered the inauguration of the use of such bio-metric cameras in Berlin. One citizen asked about the event said that she fears that the impact of such technologies might be mostly psychological, as the cameras will not 'catch' the criminals, while one other said that she prefers control to crime.

[193] In an article about novel advertising campaigns at the street level of Helsinki I read: "JCDecaux's Finnish slogan, 'The best are known by heart' (Parhaat muistetaan ulkoa), shows the impact of outdoor advertising. Nowadays the cityscape is full of irritants, so outdoor advertising needs to stand out from everything else so the message gets across." (Veinola & Noor 2005, p.139)

[194] "Personal Space: The space surrounding an individual, anywhere within which an entering other causes the individual to feel encroached up, leading him to show displeasure and sometimes to withdraw." (Goffman 1972, p.29-30)
Goffman (1972, p. 31) argues that this "space" varies according to factors such as "local population density." In Finland, a not densely populated country, and in Helsinki, the most densely populated territory in the country, the notion of a well-defined personal space is prevalent. The overall low Finnish population density may be the reason for this. In Helsinki the urbanites who often originate from the countryside need their personal territory. Although the Finnish urban manners alter with time, certain behavioural patterns indicative of personal space and intimacy in public are noteworthy. Before I got that knowledge of Finnish urban manners I had quite a few startled responses by Finns jumping back at me when I was asking for directions in the streets of Helsinki.

The Finnish Context - Identity, State and Immigrants

In Finland on the socio-spatial level I see a pursuit of safety that seems to work: safe, conflict free urban environments in a welfare state, based on contractual rather than ritual forms of association, as Lefebvre and Régulier have suggested (Kofman & Lebas 1996, p. 233).[195] The legacy of the welfare state, where the common good is of primary significance along with individualism, has a strong impact on Finnish cultural identity. Today Finns are facing the challenges of globalisation, unemployment, and negotiable welfare while gradually ethnic minorities constitute a potential fiscal strain and cultural stain. It is Nordic societies that we southern Europeans often look up to. In these, communities were guaranteed by oaths, pacts, charters and reciprocal good faith. In the North, these contractual forms of alliances tend to be more restrictive, disembodied and abstract. In southern Europe, social relations tend to be based on unspoken or explicit alliances such as families, clans, mafias, and clientelism (Kofman & Lebas 1996, p. 234). Probably more in the South than in the North, public spaces take on a life of their own, through urbanites' actions and interactions and through time. However, it is a common truth that regardless if one is in the North or South, some public spaces become our favourites, some we associate ourselves with, and this creating of spatial history requires architects, planners, designer and managers to revisit our roles, goals and understandings.

Helsinki is a paradigm of a European metropolis of the Nordic welfare state and specifically of the Finnish information society (Lehto 2000, Gallie 1999, Allen 1998). Helsinki is one of the urban strongholds of the Nordic welfare regime.[196] A system based on progressive taxation, universal social benefits, high-quality public services, drastic redistribution of market incomes by the state, relatively low poverty rates and, in the centre of this study, a long tradition (since 1920s) of social mixing aiming at the development of heterogeneous and socially balanced neighbourhoods, thus preventing socio-spatial segregation. Very soon after the formation of the independent Finnish state in 1917 there was a civil war in which the rural and urban poor united under the red army. With the end of the war the Finnish state

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195 Kofman, E. & Lebas, E. (eds.) (1996). *Writings on Cities. Henri Lefebvre*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers. In the book there is an English translation of Henri Lefebvre and Catherine Régoulier's essay, Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities. The essay "Rythmanalyses des villes méditerranéennes" by Henri Lefebvre and atherine Régoulier, was first published in 1986 in the issue 37 of *Pueples Méditerranéens*. For the original version in French see also: Henri Lefebvre (1992) *Éléments de rythmanalyse. Introduction á la connaissance des rythmes*. Paris: Syllepse.

196 Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is the urban centre of the least urbanised European country with approximately an average of 17 inhabitants per square kilometre and in 1998 60.1% of country's population lived in urban areas. Helsinki metropolitan area houses approximately 1.200.000 inhabitants (559.716 live in the city of Helsinki) of whom 87, 6 % are Finnish, 6,4% Swedish and 6% of other nationality. Helsinki is the capital of a bilingual country with both Finnish and Swedish as official languages. Approximately 4.000 people of African origin live in the city of Helsinki. Of these most are from Somalia and they constitute a minority far from being homogeneous still perceived as such in a country with a recent immigration history and a previously very distinct and compact population fabric. See: http://tilastokeskus.fi/index_en.html
http://virtual.finland.fi/finfo/English/foreign.html

Helsinki, 2003. Helsinki Railway Station, underground level.

showed a remarkable persistence in keeping, at first the poor, and later all social and a few ethnic groups dispersed in the city; a policy that has been exemplified for its effectiveness. Social equality is thus achieved resulting in Helsinki's being ranked top as the most even in its socio-spatial composition.[197]

Castells and Himmanen (2002) show that a special model of information society has been developed in Finland, the Finnish Model of the Information Society.[198] In the 1990s though, the financial depression hit Finland more than any other member country of the OECD, and harder than anything since the Second World War.[199] The Finnish welfare system responded quite effectively, while Helsinki resorted, to a greater degree than before, to social mixing policies to work against potential segregation from the rise in unemployment. At the very same

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[197] Vaattovaara & Kortteinen (2003, p. 2129).
Klinge and Kolbe (1999) give a detailed account on the socio-spatial development of Helsinki. It seems that in Finland there has been a persistent tension between agrarian traditions and urbanism. This tension was (still is) evident at all levels, including politics, social structures, economics, and so on. Helsinki's masterminds have to bring the two opposing ideals in harmony, and de-demonize the ill-reputed urban life. Socio-spatial equality seems such a harmonising pacifier; an ideal in itself. In this context it is a vital challenge to counteract money-starving market interests in favour of socially sensible business.

In this respect participatory policies and grass-root initiatives can greatly benefit Helsinki as an inclusive city. The authorities have to make sure to distribute equally representational resources and facilitate grass-root mobilisation, even to positively discriminate in favour of underrepresented weaker groups of stake holders.

[198] Castells, M. & Himanen, P. (2002). *The Information Society and the Welfare State: The Finnish Model.* Oxford: Oxford Press, pp. 77-170

[199] Vaattovaara & Kortteinen (2003, p. 2129).

time, the largest wave of refugees from Somalia arrived in Finland. This was an unfortunate coincidence and has ever since coincided with the view of refugees and certain immigrants as a source of degradation of the high living standard in Finland. T expressed her/his fear that in a few years or so the public opinion in Finland may associate the arrival of refugees with the 90s' recession in Finland and the shortcomings of social welfare that followed.[200]

4.2 DISCRIMINATION AND SPATIAL SEGREGATION IN HELSINKI

A few years back when I first started to talk about socio-spatial discrimination in Helsinki, the responses I was getting were mixed. However, often a discouraging feeling would come to fill me with insecurities about my inadequacies in understanding the Finnish language and society. When I was referring to my literature research findings, and to how I related them to the Finnish space regarding, for instance, to gender socio-spatial discrimination in Finnish space, I was made to believe I was almost blasphemous.

The emancipation of women in Finnish society has a long history; however, the situation nowadays may not be as satisfying as is generally assumed.[201] The latter has acquired the vague status of a myth, so nicely compartmentalised by the Finnish post-feminist politics, that indisputable gender equality has only a few legitimate challengers. And a foreigner like me, born and raised in a masculinist, southern European society, can only be a blind ignorant. This is not to generalise the freezing of gender discourse. There are people who don't feel comfortable limiting equality and social justice dialogues to the assumed connoisseurs. Leena Eräsaari (1994) writes about the women moving in public space:

> "It requires much learning in the art of observation before we notice how women make themselves small, and men make themselves big. It takes long time before we notice that women sit, stand and walk in public places in ways that take up little space; they sit with their hands in their laps, with their legs closed. Men, on the other hand, make their presence felt by occupying plenty of space when they walk; they stand with their feet wide apart, and sit with their legs apart and their arms spread out. When a man and a woman pass each other in the street the woman steps aside. […]But these different ways of displaying gender in public places are conventional learned habits. The conventions are not biologically based but reflect how people are trained to interact according to gender; they are behavioural differences." (Eräsaari 1994, p.202).

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[200] Discussion N017 (Helsinki, 26.11.2003), with T an academic at Helsinki University.

[201] Carole Pateman (2000) in her critical analysis of the Scandinavian patriarchal welfare states writes: "In the more developed welfare states of Scandinavia, women have moved nearer to, but have not yet achieved, full citizenship." (Pateman 2000, p.239)

Eräsaari (2002) in addition presents the case of women employees who suffered the loss of their livelihoods during changes in the Finnish public administration, during the early and mid nineties.[202] Herewith, we see an example of the insufficient way gender issues have been debated in Finland.

> "It is uncertain whether Finnish law on equality would have made a difference during the organisational reform in question, for the law does not recognise the so-called 'positive discrimination'; the law forbids discrimination among equals, but does not demand the selection of women or other minority groups when the scales are even. As far as I have understood it, during the organisational reform none of the women architects or engineers even unofficially took up gender issues."(Eräsaari 2002, p. 222)

In a research paper about discrimination in Finland, Timo Makkonen (2003) talks about discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, age, disability, and sexuality.[203] This research report is enlightening on the levels of discrimination in Finland. We read that in regard to ethnic discrimination, Somalis are the people who have suffered more discrimination than any other group (Makkonen 2003, p.31).[204] Muslim's evoke negative sentiments in Finland, which was a pioneering country in officially recognising an Islamic community. Other kinds of discrimination Makkonen presents are: ageism, heterosexism, and ableism.

Finnish literature on such matters is inaccessible to me. Facing this difficulty, I contacted people who could enlighten me with their own personal experience. I have conducted discussions with people from SETA in Helsinki,[205] a mentally challenged Finnish man, Somali men and one woman, and a few more who gave me their own perspectives on what it means to be a homosexual man or woman, an African, or have a mental handicap. Their views may be invaluable for some or biased and partial for others. Given my limited expertise in conducting as well as analysing these discussions, I am the first to admit to their inadequacy. It would, though, be too inconsiderate to my interlocutors to discard their stories, for they shaped my research considerably.

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[202] Eräsaari's case study concerns predominantly cleaning women who lost their jobs when the very large organisation of the National Board of Building was closed down in 1994-5.

[203] Makkonen, T. (2003). *Anti-discrimination handbook.* Vammala: International Organisation for Migration. [Online]. Available in Finnish, French, German, Greek and Swedish at: http://iom.fi/content/view/35/47/ (Accessed: 28 March 2007).

[204] The page number refers to the Finnish online publication of Makkonen's handbook.

[205] SETA in Finnish stands for Sexual Equality. SETA ry is the Finnish Association for Sexual Equality. My contacts were from the branch of SETA in Helsinki.

Spatial Segregation

The eqalitarian policies for spatial anti-segregation in Helsinki City are official policy.[206] In their research, Mari Vaattovaara and Matti Kortteinen (2003) tell a different story. The different residential areas of Helsinki are similar in their internal heterogeneity, each containing few "pockets" of poverty and unemployment. One would expect that this would be generalised to the entire city. But despite the policies of mixing, a division based on educational level has arisen. In the 90's this division produced obvious urban spatial differentiation. The division splits the metropolitan area of Helsinki into west and east. In the western parts, surrounding the Helsinki University of Technology (in the city of Espoo), most companies of the information sector settled along with most of their well-educated and more affluent employees. In the east of the City of Helsinki the less educated, working class and most unemployed are situated. The results are made clearer with the patterns of migration, which show that these areas are more desirable to poorer households due to relatively cheaper living. These areas of the east are lagging considerably behind in economic structure compared to south-western Helsinki, currently, though, there are persistent efforts to bridge this gap. Impoverishment has even emerged in the east. Indicatively, these areas have gathered most of

Helsinki, 2003. Central shopping area, Kluuvikatu.

the long-term unemployed of Helsinki, a spatial phenomenon unprecedented before, for example, 1988.[207] It seems that the Finnish model of the information society is unable to stop socio-spatial differentiation from developing, especially at the level of the high income earners, meanwhile pockets of poverty in the size of a block, a house or even a staircase are scattered around the grey zones, where a strange "social mixing" has brought more less privileged people together.

What is interesting among other things in the situation roughly sketched above is that the ethnic minorities, whose number increased dramatically after the 90s, have clearly begun to concentrate in roughly the same poorer eastern areas of the city (Vaattovaara, Kortteinen 2003, p. 2137-2139). Another reason for this spatial segregation is the policies for social

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[206] Because, however, of the fact that the metropolitan area of Helsinki consists of four relatively independent municipalities (the cities of Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen), we cannot generalise about the impact of these policies for the whole metropolitan area.

[207] "As a spatial phenomenon, long-term unemployment did not exist in 1988. [...] The change in ten years has been rapid." (Vaattovaara & Kortteinen 2003, p.2139)

Helsinki, 2003. Aleksanterinkatu, in the heart of Helsinki centre.

Helsinki, 2003. The square at Meri Rastila Aukio (east Helsinki).

Helsinki, 2003. Myllypuro area (east Helsinki).

Helsinki, 2003. Hut by the bridge connecting Helsinki and the island of Lauttasaari.

housing; for example concerning the families of ethnic origin, the social houses most suitable for their larger than average size are concentrated in the periphery with an eastwards tendency. The current situation is slightly different since even the arithmetic has changed and the ethnic minorities don't count such small numbers anymore; as Karisto has put it already twenty years ago:

> "[…] even if marginalization is milder in Finland than elsewhere, that does not make it any less unpleasant for the marginalised. The arithmetic of social power shows that, the smaller a minority is, the easier it is to ignore its problems." (Karisto 1990, p.34-5)[208]

Among ethnic transnationals, Africans are the most distinctive, and often subject to racist sentiments and discrimination. Native Finns often blame the refugees for taking advantage of social benefits, and draining the resources of "their" welfare state, and apparently don't feel any obligation to reciprocate and contribute to the growth of the Finnish state. Helsinki's ambitions have been recorded in various policy guidebooks and strategic planning tool kits.

Reading them I learned about the new type of city culture, which is gradually taking shape, and its inclusive role in attracting people into the city centre. We learn that the city needs to produce a range of multicultural happenings not only for the general public but also to cater the minority tastes. However, the more international culture Helsinki can offer, the more it needs to be specifically Finnish in nature. The idea of the Helsinki centre as a cultural living room for its inhabitants has been tempting, especially when attention is drawn to accessibility and public spaces' attractiveness. Other pieces of advice we read about the cityscape and

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208 See Karisto, A. (1990). Some Marginalisation Processes in Finland. In D. Gordon & O. Riihinen (eds.) *Exclusion in cities in Britain and Finland. Proceedings of the seminar held at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Helsinki University of Technology.* Helsinki: University of Helsinki Department of Social Policy, Tutkimuksia-Research reports, pp. 25-37.

My experience after quite a few interviews and discussions with experts on urban phenomena in Helsinki shows that often they - mainly social scientists, planners and designers - tend to downgrade the immigrants' presence in today's Finland.

urban atmosphere; pedestrianisation should continue, bright lights should captivate the 'users' and different functions and services must improve. The city becomes a stage where citizens are actors and spectators and the role of public spaces is to provide the setting for the entire spectacle to take place. Young people are recognised as a group city planning tends to ignore since they have no places of their own in the centre.[209]

It is regrettable that there are very few cases where the city strategic planning announcements avoid the stereotypical politicised rhetoric. Instead the numerous publications strive to normalise urban processes, alleviating edgy issues. It is difficult to find such publications with any constructive value, policy wise. In a 2001 basis for discussion, we learn that in Helsinki one can encounter a genuine multicultural and multi-layered urban culture, while a strong local identity or sense of place based on historical roots and local administrative traditions are also important features for living surroundings. The position of transnational people in the city is remarkably absent from this basis for discussion.[210]

In the report for the fifth course of the Finland 2015 programme, immigrants are seen as valuable, resourceful people as long as they are highly qualified and live and work in the country for a limited period only; these people should be allured by lower taxation and competitive salaries, while the Finnish attitude should change towards a more immigrant friendly one. The report mentions the names of the participants in this program, which aimed at putting "Finland among the three most successful nations in the world by 2010." National and local government, capital, IT and leading industries are included.[211]

The Finnish Information Society

Manuel Castells and Pekka Himanen (2002) describe the extraordinary country that is Finland.[212] They entitle Finnish Information Society the draft description of the dynamic developments that brought Finland from the background of a poor and agrarian society thirty years ago to the most competitive economy of nowadays worldwide. Bell and Hietala agree with Castells and Himanen's suggestion that the strong Finnish identity has been a major reason for the success of Finnish society (Bell and Hietala 2002, p.373). Castells and Himanen try to describe a situation providing insights and hypothesising in order to bring out the

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209 Helsinki City Planning Department/ Master Plan Unit (1996). *Strategic Planning Advice 1995, Towards 2000 and the New Millenium. Meeting of the City Council 18.9. 1996.* Helsinki City Planning Department Publications, 1996:21 ENG.

210 Espoo-Helsinki-Kauniainen-Sipoo-Vantaa (2001). *Development Strategy for Municipalities' Joint Land Use. Basis for Discussion, 12 January 2001.*

211 Sitra (2002). *Finland 2015. Finnish success factors and challenges for the future 5.* Available at: http://www.sitra.fi/julkaisut/Suomi2015%5CSuomi2015-Report5.pdf?download= (Accessed: 22 April 2007).

212 Castells, M. & Himanen, P. (2002). *The Information Society and the Welfare State: The Finnish Model.* Oxford: Oxford Press, pp. 77-170.

strong points of Finnish society and create a case study of development. They don't stop at praising the Finnish Information Society as the ideal partnership between welfare values and technological advancement; they also describe some potential drawbacks. One recurring argument concerns Finnish identity in relation to discrimination and multiculturalism. Castells and Himanen (2002) identify as a problem for the Finnish society its persistence in ethnic and social homogeneity in a world that more and more turns multicultural.[213] A counter argument is that Finnish society has always been multicultural, with various minorities and even an indigenous minority (the Sami people).[214]

Castells and Himanen speak of the Minority Attitude of Finns, their strong *We*, their belief in Protestant hard-work ethics, and their persistence in ethnic and social homogeneity for their egalitarian welfare to continue and flourish.[215] All these descriptions are intertwined, and regardless if they are general norms or stereotypes, since they are not easily quantifiable they can be disputed at any moment. What these descriptions point to, though, is an alleged difficulty of a part at least of Finnish society, to be part of the world and accept the world as part of it as well. I cannot be certain about the preceding; however, what I imply is inclusiveness and social justice. The latter is not easy in a welfare state so concretely bureaucratised to serve Finnish society and its legitimate stake holders in good and harsh times.

Castells and Himanen (2002, p. 96-100) talk of "social hackerism" and see it as an important grass-root strategy for insurgent innovative forces to flourish. I agree with them as Holston I imagine, would also. I see "hackerism" as an asset for participatory strategies in social change. It should be pointed out though that this imagination, social as well as technological and entrepreneurial, if fostered by the state authorities, should also be perceived as an equal opportunity for social change coming from the grass root including all the stake holders of Finnish society, not least the weaker, underrepresented, marginalised, and discriminated people. The "New Inequalities" that Castells and Himanen (2002, p.156-8) present, point to the abandonment by welfare of the weakest groups: the elderly, the mentally challenged and the addicts to alcohol and substances. In addition the spatial segregation that they see in Finland with the 'hydrocephalisation' of Helsinki, is further described, as seen earlier, by Vaattovaara and Kortteinen (2003) concerning the metropolitan area of Helsinki itself.[216]

The problem of spatial segregation may arise when the strong nuclei for development, material and symbolic resources are getting stronger while the weak nuclei of relative poverty and

213 See for instance Castells & Himanen (2002, p.163-5).

214 Concerning the myth of mono-cultural Finland: "While social and ethnic 'otherness' was often marked by a strong stigma, it was nevertheless a familiar everyday phenomenon, as 'foreigners', 'strangers' or 'outsiders' were encountering regularly on the doorsteps of the sedentary population." (Häkkinen & Tervonen 2004, p.37)

215 ibid., p. 134-9, 156-8, 160, 163-165.

216 ARAVA is a state run loan scheme for housing development, catering to people of lower incomes. In an article in the newspaper Helsingin Uutiset (30.08.2006) we read about immigrants' housing roulette, how authorities try to disperse them around metropolitan Helsinki, while immigrants often wish to live close to their compatriots. We read that in 2005, 55,7 % of the ARAVA rental housing stock was in an area of Helsinki wherein 26.9% of the residents were foreigners. This area presented the largest

social marginalisation are getting weaker.[217] This in a welfare state such as the Finnish one may prove even more divisive, amongst the *haves* and the *have nots*, among the legitimate benefi ciaries of the welfare and its perpetrators, the Finns and the non Finns, and so on.

> "There are not any very large-scale social problems that would disturb the coher- ence of the society. Still, the polarisation of the Finnish society seems to increase all the time. Economic and social divisions between those who have jobs and those who do not, are constantly increasing. There is a certain group of people in our society that is doing extremely well. Then, on the other hand, there is another group of those who suffer from the risks of social exclusion." (Heikkinen 2000, p.8)

In view of the above divisions, social coherence seems like old-time rhetoric; a nostalgia craving for what? An alleged homogeneous but predominantly agrarian society benefitting from an egalitarian welfare system?[218] Agrarian, is a characterisation of Finnish society that coincides with the overall concept of Finland as a traditionally rural country; therefore urban *savoir faire* is not considered an idiom of Finnishness.[219] Finland being a scarcely populated country, there seems to be a consensus, hasn't shown signs of a developed urban culture. Urban culture tradition- ally coincides with tolerance and development of processes of negotiation with the stranger, the foreign and heterogeneous. The parlance that wants to present Finnish identity as homogeneous relies on this accepted lack of an urban tradition of tolerance to diversity.[220] Similarly to Finnish social homogeneity, this principle of Finnish rural values is normalised; however, there are scholars who have shown that Finland even in rural areas demonstrated socio-spatial structures that must have built some kind of urban consciousness. Finnish villagers had to deal with the 'Other' and the stranger as they lived in dense conurbations. This was at least the case before Swedish rule dismantled those villages as unhygienic, and instead dictated the scarcely popu- lated landscape of later years.[221]

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percentage of foreigners living in a single area in Helsinki. It is not a coincidence that this conjunction occurs, and furthermore it is quite telling of the situation of foreigners, or certain groups of foreigners, and the spatial segrega- tion evident in Helsinki. The fact that this partly self- segregation doesn't produce slums doesn't mean that spatial segregation is not also induced, or that it does not produce social inequalities.

217 Castells & Himanen (2002, p.157).

218 Castells and Himanen (2002) write that while Finns have been under Swedish and Russian rule they main- tained a horizontal social structure. Are we to make of this that during these long periods there were no social divi- sions amongst Finns?

219 I refer here to my understanding of Castells & Himanen (2002), Bell & Hietala (2002), and Klinge & Kolbe (1999).

220 "Consensus politics [...] It can also mean, and in prac- tice has more often meant, a policy of avoiding or evading differences or divisions of opinion in an attempt to 'secure the centre' or 'occupy the middle ground.' [...] The negative sense of consensus politics was intended to describe de- liberative evasion of basic conflicts of principle, but also a process in which certain issues were effectively excluded from political argument – not because there was actual agreement on the, nor because a coalition had arrived at some compromise, but because in seeking for the 'middle ground' which the parties would then compete to capture there was no room for issues not already important (be- cause they were at some physical distance from normal everyday life – faraway or foreign, or because their effects were long-term, or because they affected only minorities). Consensus while retaining a favourable sense of general agreement, acquired the unfavourable senses of bland or shabby evasion of necessary issues or arguments." (Williams 1976, p.77)

4.3 THE 'OTHER'

Public spaces are places for all; however, in practice this means that some people are included and others excluded. This makes public spaces politically biased towards many groups of people in our cities; some of these groups constitute the 'Other.' These groups are not homogeneous, as we often wish to think; in fact, as with any societal body, they are homogeneous mainly in their internal diversity. The question is whether the city provides the platform for people of various groups to express their identities, not as stage performances in ethnic food venues and music festivals but as part of our everyday negotiation with the stranger, the different, the 'Other.'

The City of Helsinki is vibrant, and there are annual events that celebrate the city's culture, even in the darkest months in winter. Festivities include Vappu, celebrating the coming of spring on May Day, or the Night of the Arts on the last Thursday in August, Independence Day on 6th of December and so on. All these occasions for celebration bring the people into a negotiating process with the people who are in control of the safeguarding of city life; a negotiation concerning the city's central public spaces too. But who are the participants in these celebrations? If these occasions for celebration are expressions of an urban culture characteristic of the identity of a city, then the participants' profile would or should reveal this culture's inclusiveness and the accessibility of the city's public life and spaces. In fact getting out of the domain of everyday life and getting into the domain of the exceptional in the public life of a city, one can address the issue of who participates and in what way, in the occasions to celebrate city life. In a1991 survey mapping the participants of that year's festivities for the Night of the Arts in Helsinki, there is no mention of foreign participants. This either wasn't an issue at that time for the researchers who conducted the survey, or the foreigners' participation was negligible. Whatever the case, since the study was published in 1999, one would expect a reference on how Helsinki's transnational and ethnic minorities

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221 I refer here to the doctoral dissertation of Taina Rajanti (1999). The dissertation is in Finnish therefore I contacted Rajanti via email. Here is what she wrote in her email responding to my questions about the issue at hand: "I present this interpretation of the facts in my thesis *Kaupunki on Ihmisen koti* [The City is the house of people], page 51. My basic theses is that people are distinguished into 'country- folk' only in modernity, and that all historical attempts to create separate and homogeneous communities, and/or separate the 'countryside,' are always due to some political interest, power-relation, or ideology. The historian to whom I refer is Martti Rapola and his work *Pelto jää taakse* [The fields are left behind]. I have a quote from Rapola concerning old villages, he has interviewed an elderly person who says about the villages that they 'were built so dense that one could leap from one roof to the other, to her/his neighbor.' In Finnish villages the tradi-

tion was to have people living together, in a densely built village, with the fields surrounding them. The fields were 'common,' divided lane by lane, not into privately owned plots. This was a process called Isojako [Big Division], begun in 1757 by the Swedish crown, according to which the villages were demolished, the fields divided into plots, and the present non-urban country-side formed. The process was finished at the beginning of 1800, and was completed by an 'uusjako' [new division or re-division] in 1848. The idea was pretty clear to me, and not a question of historical evidence. People do not live in separate and homogeneous communities, those are not primary. Primarily, people live in communities which are urban: they contain the unknown, the stranger, and not only as something that they rejected. Also, putting greenery in cities is not anti-urban; while trying to induce homogeneous communities, is." (Rajanti, T. personal communication, 14 December 2006)

Helsinki, 2003. In the area of the Helsinki Railway Station.

Helsinki, 2003. In the area of the Helsinki Railway Station.

Helsinki, 2003. Helsinki Railway Station.

participate in the celebrations of urban life in the public spaces of the city.[222]

It has been proven that racial violence and harassment against immigrants take place in the public or semi-public spaces of the city; this alone might explain many kinds of segregation and even spatial self-segregation.[223] Hille Koskela, a Finnish Geographer, has worked on the matter of women's fear of violence in the urban space of Helsinki (Koskela 1997, 1999, 2000). Reading her observations one cannot help to think how they are applicable to more groups of city inhabitants who, numerous or not, suffer from fears of moving in public and a subtle but effective form of spatial exclusion. There are some black African immigrants, the courageous ones, who try to participate in the city's nightlife but often are bounced back by inhospitable bouncers.[224] There are people, including many Finns, who just abstain from public spaces at high-risk periods.[225]

In the report of a research consortium on ethnicity, integration and marginalisation in Finland between 2000 and 2003, we read about the research settings:

> "In Kari Vähätalo's research the problems are approached through Serge Moskovici's theory of social representation. According to the theory, different ethnic groups represent different social representations. The groups under empirical analysis have been selected in a manner where English-speakers represent groups of positive representation, Estonians represent groups of ambiguous representation, and Russian and Somalis represent groups of negative representation."[226]

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[222] Timo Cantell refers to this survey of 1991, in his book of 1999, *Helsinki and a Vision of Place.* Helsinki: City of Helsinki Urban Facts, pp.169.

[223] "According to the study of Virtanen (1996), violent acts took place mostly in the streets, in restaurants or discos, or on public transport. [...] Most acts ended with the flight of the victim, and most respondents talked about their style of avoiding violence." (Virtanen 2001, p.121)
"For the perpetrators of violence, the visibility of Black Africans seems to offer a reason for fight over the turf, while more organized ideologies of 'race' may be pursued among some segments of the Finns." (Virtanen 2001, p.122)

[224] This was told to me by three Nigerian men living in Helsinki. Discussion No8 (Helsinki, 12.4.2003), with A and B Nigerian students. Discussion No16 (Helsinki, 17.11.2003), with S a Nigerian living and working in Helsinki.

[225] One of the reasons for the fear some may experience in such high-risk periods is of course intoxication. Public inebriates, but also occasional alcohol abusers can cause distress to those who are not in the same situation. Finland shows the signs of alcohol abuse that we find in other Nordic countries. During the 1980s in Helsinki there were approximately 50.000 drunkenness related arrests per year (Rahkonen 1990, p.46).

[226] See Häkkinen, A. & Tervonen, M. (2004). Ethnicity, Marginalization and Poverty in 20th-Century Finland. In V. Puuronen, A. Häkkinen, A. Pylkkänen, T. Sandlund & R. Toivanen (eds.) *New Challenges for the Welfare Society.* Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Publications of Karelian Institute, pp. 22-39.

The discussion with AO, my only Somali woman informant, was enlightening.

> What is revolting about Somalis? Why Finnish people, educated or not, have Somalis at such a low esteem? The term used in media 'Somalit' is an offensive term. [About Somali women and the railway station] It is an unnerving place. I am looked at, stared at.

AO practically runs through the station; she is afraid of the men there, the Roma, Somali. She is also afraid of Roma women. In the station mostly Finnish men have approached her to ask for money or to start an argument. Her experiences though have been mostly from the underground floor shopping area, Tunneli, going to the metro. She is afraid of standing or hanging around loud men, and youngsters. She has even been offered money for sex on a train to Turku; that was when she wasn't wearing a head scarf. She feels that her scarf helps her not to be sexually harassed. AO feels safer wearing a scarf especially in public spaces, even the police don't ask her for her ID.

> Why does police ask for Somali men's ID? Two years ago, early in one morning while I was at the station I heard an announcement on the loudspeakers "We urge all Somalis to leave the station if they don't have any business here."[227]

There is a project of police action and co-operation since 1998, aiming at the prevention of robberies and street violence in the centre of Helsinki. The description of the project, brief and clear, explains who constitute the targets of this project:

> "The number of robberies and means of payment frauds in Helsinki City centre rose seriously in the late 1990's. […] Almost all the offenders in cleared offences (robberies and means of payment frauds) had an ethnic background. The crimes were concentrated around the Main Railway and the entertainment area in the downtown, an area with a constant flow of people on their way to and from work and entertainment locales. […] One group [of offenders] consisted of youngsters from ethnic minorities who mainly committed assaults and robberies against other youngsters spending time downtown, these robberies and assaults concentrated on evenings and weekends. These offences were not highly planned. It later turned out that the criminal behaviour of these offenders originated from social difficulties at home and at school. Particularly conspicuous was the number of young Somalis among

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227 Discussion No40 (Helsinki, 11.12.2004), AO Somali woman around her midtwenties living in Helsinki.

this group. Many of the worst offenders had arrived in Finland through the family reunification programme. Many of these individuals had very weak and unstable family situations."[228]

From another report we read:

"The Government action plan to combat ethnic discrimination and racism ('Towards Ethnic Equality and Diversity') was adopted 22.3.2001. The purpose of the programme is to support and develop measures promoting good ethnic relations and preventing ethnic discrimination and racism in Finnish society. […] Altogether 202 family reunification applications were lodged in 2001. Most of the applicants were Somali (55), Afghans (53) and Iraqis (23)."[229]

Finally, although various sources might give slightly different statistical data concerning foreigners residing in Finland, they all agree that the third largest group is constituted by people originating from Somalia.[230]

In her research on Somali girls in the city of Turku, Anu Isotalo conducted a large number of interviews.

"In the interviews, informants have represented interesting comparisons between Turku and the metropolitan area. According to them, in contrast to Turku, everyday life of Somali girls in Helsinki is freer, less moral, and more Western (Finnish). In addition, because of many weddings and other parties taking place in Helsinki, girls have more activities outside home. In other words, life in Helsinki is notably different from Turku, and, depending on the respondent, either something to hope for, or an example of moral degradation." (Isotalo 2007, p.197)[231]

There are various conclusions one may draw from the above texts, and there are a couple of striking ones. In Finland for some time now the black Somali people embody a group that attracts enormous attention from the receiving society. Especially in Helsinki where, as one would expect, there is the largest concentration of Somalis in Finland, the urban policies,

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228 National Council for Crime Prevention. *Preventing robberies in Helsinki.* [Online]. Available at: http://www. rikoksentorjunta.fi/19254.htm (Accessed: 28 March 2007).

229 *ECRE Country Report 2001: Finland.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.ecre.org/country01/Finland.pdf (Accessed: 22 March 2007).

230 From the web-site of Statistics Finland we see that according to Population Statistics in 2005 in Finland there were 8.593 persons with Somali as their first language, of them 7.260 lived in the South of Finland that includes the Helsinki metropolitan area, 4.704 of them had Somali citizenship.
http://pxweb2.stat.fi/Database/Population/
Population%20Structure/Population%20Structure.asp
http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_
en.html#Foreigners

231 Turku is a southwest sea-side city in Finland.

the media discourse, policing, all indicate that justifiably, or not, Somalis represent a threat. Meanwhile, much too often, Somali men and women experience fear themselves. Finnish legislation provides a fertile ground for intercultural communication as a panacea for racism; top-down legislation, though, often proves inadequate for encouraging intercultural public dialogue. For this a multilevel effort must be facilitated for public forums to sincerely and transparently open up communication, from the grass-roots.

The Helsinki Railway Station is not irrelevant at this point. Somali and other urbanites of foreign background have been stigmatised, and themselves, too, stigmatise the space as threatening.[232] As in the case of Albanians in Greece, stigmatised groups, like the Somalis may internalise their given role of welfare perpetrator and pure, uncivilised racialised 'Other.' This 'Other,' too, is housed in the station.

Somalis

The war against Ethiopia, defeat, civil war, serious droughts, famine, political instability and violence, have led approximately a million Somali people to abandon their country and scatter around the world. Finland was already known to many of them as one of the countries that had signed the UN refugee agreement. It has been a long and expensive trip for most Somali people, investing in a better but above all a safe place. Apparently Finnish scholars fuelled by the "research industry" very soon started to research the immigration phenomenon and the Somali population.[233]

Due to the circumstances around Somalis' arrival in Finland,[234] and because of their skin colour, appearance and religious and cultural traditions, they represent the outmost other in Finnish society.[235] It is essential here to point out that in Finland a substantial body of research uses as subjects Somali people.[236] The discrimnatory mechanisms of both the incoming transnational and the receiving population seem to block a common effort to understand each other. It is my belief that Finnish society could greatly benefit from research done to understand Somaliness, and I would add that it could also benefit by under-standing Finnishness in the face of transnationals' presence.

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[232] Long before the 90´s and the arrival of Somalis, the station had an ambiguous reputation, especially due to the rough atmosphere of the underground level. Tommi Hoikkala has published in the late 80´s, in Finnish and Swedish, about this area of the city.

[233] In a discussion with Petri Hautaniemi, a Finnish Social Anthropologist, that is how he characteristically called this phenomenon of extensive research in all fields, taking place in Finland.

[234] See Lilius (2001, p.xxvi), also Lojander-Visapää, C. (2001). Basketball, Quranstudies and Rap Music. In M. S.

Lilius (ed.) *Variations on the Theme of Somaliness*. Turku: Centre for Continuing Education Åbo Akademi University, pp. 356-361.

[235] "Furthemore, available statistical data shows that the Somalis are the most victimized group with respect to aggravated assaults, illegal threats, assaults and violations of home peace (Ministry of Interior 1998). However, it is evident that the real level of crime is not accurately reflected in statistics recorded by the police." (Virtanen 2001, p.120-1)

[236] A publication I appreciate for trying to include Somali voices: M. S. Lilius (ed.) (2001) *Variations on the Theme of*

The public response to the immigration wave in the 90's has been taken as another sign of the economic recession that hit Finland and, as Vaattovaara suggested, continues today since the number of foreigners and especially refugees entitled to social benefits, according to the Finish welfare system, rose rapidly. Nevertheless, compared with other EU countries, the immigrant population in Finland has always been the smallest (Svinhufvud 1999, p.11).[237] Out of 539,000 people living in the City of Helsinki in the early nineties, there were 22,000 foreigners, and of them the three largest immigrant groups were the Russian, Estonian and then the Somali, immigrants. Of them, 2021 were Somali, most of whom arrived in Finland in the early 90's as asylum seekers. Most of them didn't get asylum just a temporary residence permit (Svinhufvud 1999, p.1). During the last years, immigration policies have been tightened in Finland in accordance with the tightening of all European states' immigration policies. Still a few Somalis are arriving in the country reuniting with their families who now live in Finland.

Homeless

"It's hardest in the evenings. After work I go to the library. Read the newspapers. It takes hours. Sometimes I take the tram and ride the line in circles. I go to the movies. It's dark and warm in there. I always fall asleep. I don't get to know the plot until the fifth time." (Räty 2002, p.87)[238]

"Among the 5.300 homeless households in Helsinki in 2001, 4.700 were single and 630 families. [...] In 2001, the percentage of women among homeless was 17, of under 25 year olds 12 and of immigrants four per cent. For homeless immigrants, it may be even more difficult to get a job and a flat than for homeless Finns." (Korhonen 2002, p. 18)[239]

Homeless transnational people account for 4% of the homeless people in Helsinki. It is understandable that due to the difficult circumstances these people have to face in the host society, they run higher risks of marginalisation. Among these risks, homelessness is highly probable. If we consider that Somalis constitute one of the most stigmatised groups in Finnish society, we can deduce that homelessness is a real threat, especially to Somali youth.[240]

Somaliness. Turku: Centre for Continuing Education Åbo Akademi University.

[237] Tomi Shinhufvud refers to a book in Finnish by Karmela Liebkind (edt.) (1994). *Maahanmuuttajat, Kultturinen Kohtaaminen Suomessa.* Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

[238] See Kaila & Räty (2002). *Koditon/Homeless,* a humane book with photos and texts about marginalisation, poverty and homelessness in Finland.

[239] See Korhonen, E. (2002). *Asunnottomuus Helsingissä.* [Homelessness in Helsinki]. Helsinki: City of Helsinki Urban Facts, Research Series 2002:4, pp. 17-20.

[240] On the psychological strain on Somalis, see also Forsten-Lindman, N. (2001). Psychological Adjustment among Somali Refugees in Finland. In M. S. Lilius (ed.) *Variations on the Theme of Somaliness.* Turku: Centre for Continuing Education Åbo Akademi University, p.346-355.

Helsinki, 2003. Outside Helsinki Railway Station. Food in the garbage cans?

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. Going around.
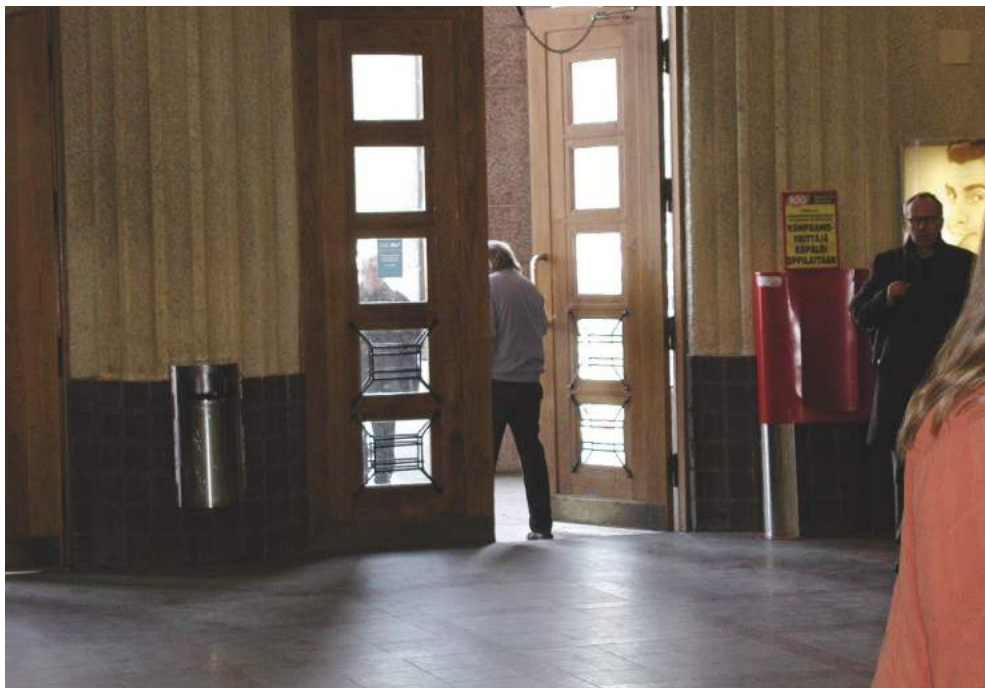
Homeless people circulate in the station at the centre of Helsinki. Some due to their appearance are difficult to miss. It is important to understand that homeless people's circumstances vary widely according to the reasons for their homelessness. Understandably, homeless people whose conditions are more telling of their situation are those who are more visible in the space. They, despite their often very discreet behaviour, are left alone to rotate in and out of the station. Some whose conditions are burdened with mental and emotional problems, as well as those who are too unclean, will most surely be asked by the guards to go or get escorted outside. Homelessness is not necessarily tied to alcohol abuse and inebriate behaviour; however, there is a strong tendency to respond to homelessness as a self-afflicted misery that either derives or results in alcoholism, vagrancy, etc.

The homeless are people who don't have their own permanent address, and may dwell in shelters or with friends and relatives. A few cases are living in *temporary* constructions like huts, or in critical situations outdoors. The homeless people who frequent the station have to deal with our looks of discontent, the persecution of the guards and, according to their condition (under the influence of substances, unclean, loud, etc.), even violent removal from the station. They rarely make use of the restaurants, cafés and or fast-food kiosks, therefore their resting areas are limited to the public areas of the station with the least facilities for resting. A coffee from a kiosk, though, affordable, is inadequate to provide a long lasting excuse for lingering in the station. Here it is maybe sufficient to say that homeless people constitute another heterogeneous group of the 'Other' at the station, and their socio-spatial discrimination is easily witnessed first hand.

The Visible-Invisible Transnational

The eastern areas of Helsinki City present a concentration of, among other populations, a large number of transnationals. These areas while are evidence of the social mixing policies, they still present higher percentages of immigrants, particularly of African origin. A hypothesis, especially concerning the Somali people living in certain neighbourhoods, has been the result of direct observation in areas like Myllypuro, Meri-Rastila, Kontula and more. There is the lack of expression of a public face of these otherwise very distinct ethnic and cultural groups. Public face constitutes the representation, in the public spaces of the city, of a self image of any group of urbanites with cultures different from the prevailing one. To put it simply, public face is the evidence of the presence of any so called *minority* group in the public life of a city. This may not be so bizarre within a welfare state where social mixing has been for long a top down policy.[241]

241 A supposedly more positive example, in the West of Helsinki this time, is the area of Pikku Huopalahti. Ever since its construction, Pikku- Huopalahti – with 23% of its inhabitants being immigrants and its colourful and exciting scenery – has at first aroused the experts' criticism of the new funfair in the city, and nowadays the praise and

The physiognomy of most European metropolises includes physical signs of multicultural environments. That is why these metropolises are attracting younger populations; they are more interesting locations. There are shops, restaurants and coffee shops targeting immigrants as specialized customer groups, but natives benefit from their presence too. In Helsinki this is happening very hesitantly. One can find very few such establishments, run by African immigrants for example, scattered around the city and not close to the areas where immigrants live (here I am not considering the large catering sector run by Turkish transnationals). The areas with the biggest concentration of ethnic food stores in Helsinki are Sörnäinen and Hakaniemi. In regard to this observation, the response I got from my Finnish interlocutors was either that there are not so many foreigners in Helsinki, so there isn't enough motivation for them to develop any kind of entrepreneurialism, or that that there are shops, but they are scarce and one should know where to go to find them.

Within Somali communities there is clear-cut gender segregation; men are circulating far more than women in the city and especially in the centre. This segregation concerning Somali women is, according to U, a self-segregation.[242] Their lives in diaspora, but also their everyday household practicalities, don't encourage them to go out. The role of the mother is so important and tightly defined that there is no free time. There are projects close to their living areas offered by the city in an effort to take them for a short while out of their houses, projects like swimming pools reserved only for them, and social events like weddings and celebrations arranged in their communities. Still they are not really visible in the public domain.[243]

The presence of Somali men and youngsters is harder to miss in public.[244] They do concentrate in the train station, outside when the weather is better, in the main hall for meetings and at the underground level for socialising. McDonald's is a favourite place where there is no alcohol and the prices are cheap. Their numbers are not so large, but they, along with other people of diaspora, seem to be a large part of the people in the space; the rest are commuters and passers by. Of course the train station is not the only public or semi public place where Somalis mix in public with others. Mosques are places that Somali people appreciate very much, mostly for religious reasons, but also because they consider them familiar and hospitable places. The mosques in Finland and in Helsinki are places for prayer in the city. They are places originally not meant for religious use; however as Isra Lehtinen stated "we call any place where we pray a mosque."[245] According to W, youngsters of ethnic origin avoid the train station because they wouldn't like to encounter their senior relatives there, but

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recognition of the project. The architect Matti Visanti thinks that the richness of the world should be reflected in space. Among all the recent attention Pikku-Huopalahti has attracted, there are the immigrant inhabitants themselves. A Moroccan café-restaurant owner in the area expressed a cautious observation; the village-like feeling of the area gives a special resident friendly character, but still people don't really mix (Falck 2003, p. 19).

242 Discussion No18 (Helsinki, 28.11.2003), with U an Asan Social Worker living in Helsinki.

243 Discussion No19 (Helsinki, 1.12.2003), with V a researcher for Helsinki City. See also: Tiilikainen, M. (2001). Suffering and Symptoms: Aspects of Everyday Life of Somali Refugee Women. In M. S. Lilius (ed.) *Variations on the Theme of Somaliness*. Turku: Centre for Continuing Education Åbo Akademi University, pp. 309-317.

also because they would prefer to avoid problems with the security; apparently they are the usual suspects for small offences taking place in the nearby shops and they are not welcome to meet, wait and gather.[246] Their status as urbanites in this city is unclear, all youngsters are basically expelled from urban public spaces and most of all those of ethnic origin.[247]

My interlocutors tried to explain to me why certain foreigners prefer to meet and socialise around the train station and not walk even five minutes across to the upgraded shopping streets of Aleksanterinkatu or Esplanade Park. Since they can't afford the services offered and the goods displayed, why should they go window-shopping, or that simply they prefer to meet in the station because it is the transportation hub of all Helsinki, bringing together friends from all over the city.[248] But even the latter case would raise questions. Could it be that in the suburbs there are not places for them? Or that in the anonymity of the metropolitan centre, their identity is more sufficiently safeguarded?

> "I asked him why they rendezvous in the station grounds. 'Not because they love to loiter,' he said, 'but because they live in very cramped rooms, ill-lit places in suburban conditions. Add to this the fact that they are chased out of the cafes because they haven't the money to pay for coffee or tea: and that, when they meet, they share news about Somalia, their love and hate.' But how come you see them at all hours? […] 'Somalis are as clumsy as a hippo emerging out of the waters of all time, arriving on Swedish soil, looks this and that way, suspicious, untrusting, fearful, and before anyone knows it, they are ready to leave for the shores of the USA or Canada. With suitcases forever packed, they return to Somalia at the whim of a mood. Tell the Swedes that we do not stay anywhere forever.'" (Farah 2000, p.174)[249]

U suggested that especially Somali youngsters try to get away from the surveillance of seniors, since according to their tradition the children are supervised in public by any older Somali, not necessarily their own parent. Young men seem to be longing for some freedom from their house regime, while girls learn to get along with what is expected of them. U mentioned in addition that Somali mothers face the problem of how to fight the cultural prototypes offered to their daughters when in the public spaces of the city.[250] V, who shares

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[244] For Somali boys in Helsinki see in Finnish, research by Petri Hautaniemi.

[245] According to this broader definition of a mosque in diaspora, there are approximately twelve mosques in the Helsinki metropolitan area (Lehtinen, I., electronic communication, 31 November and 1 December 2006).

[246] Discussion No20 (Helsinki, 3.12.2003), with W a Finnish Cultural Anthropologist.

[247] Concerning youth in public spaces: "Indeed for teenagers the street is often the only private space they can curve

out for themselves away from the regulatory gaze of family and teachers." (Valentine 1998, p.201)

[248] This became clear to me from my discussion No8 (Helsinki, 12.4.2003), discussion No27 (Helsinki, 27.6.2004), and discussion No40 (Helsinki, 11.12.2004), with two Nigerians and two Somali people.

[249] Farah, N. (2000). Yesterday, Tomorrow. Voices from the Somali Diaspora. London, New York: Cassell.

[250] Discussion No18 (Helsinki, 28.11.2003), with U an Asian Social Worker living in Helsinki.

friendships with Somalis, made a remark that set the record straight: the Somali women, because of their appearance and their clothing, have to deal with a lot of racist remarks and discrimination in public spaces, so they prefer to avoid them.[251] Since no quantitative proof can be presented in defense of this, it remains a weak but interesting argument. The absence of a *public face* to various groups is internalised and normalised by most natives. Finnish people's overall shyness seems to act as a drawback for public expressiveness, while reticence and detachment are considered essentially Finnish cultural values.[252]

The question is still if the city provides the platform for people of various groups to express their identities not as "stage performances" in ethnic food venues and music festivals but as part of our everyday negotiation with the stranger, the different, the other. S used to deal with youngsters of ethnic background, due to his job.[253] They were often restless and bitter, concerning the discriminatory attitudes they had to face in the city. S, then, used to reverse their situation and was asking them to imagine how they would feel if they were in Somalia and there was a Finnish ethnic minority. How would they behave to Finns? What S was trying to do was to project a displacement. I see displacement as a positive process that requires an act of self-refutation, of opening into areas of discourse that are normally closed; in urban space it could mean the spatial experience of cultural diversity.

It doesn't sound so receptive when the majority's perception is the point of reference from which all others must find a position in the society. During my research it became more evident that the elaborate top-down policies of the Finnish welfare system don't encourage the immigrants and refugees to establish a positive public face. Urban public space design can pose obstacles to certain groups' socio-spatial integration; in fact many group of the other in Helsinki may find it difficult to participate in public life as equals, quite as it happens in many other cities and different welfare states.

Designers should be aware of this and of the political importance of their design gestures. Space is not the absolute product of one decision but a product of many, and experiencing the physical space of an urban environment involves the negotiation of the results of many design decisions from many disciplines. Public space is seen wrongly as the occupation of urban planners, architects and maybe industrial designers. For example, the various depictions flooding public space are works of disciplines so vaguely related with the production of space that the remission of their sins is granted automatically, be they photographers, graphic designers, advertisers, the media or other. My belief is that all decisions making and

251 Discussion No19 (Helsinki, 1.12.2003), with V a researcher for Helsinki City.

252 Discussion No3 (Helsinki, 24.1.2003), with E and F from SETA the Finnish organisation for Sexual Equality.
"KALLE: No, cockroaches. I've noticed that the Finns suffer badly from cockroaches. Strangely enough, they have not pest extermination companies. All we need is a little capital, a van with a sign on it, a few tins of poison gas - which no doubt we can get from Germany on the black market. And we'll clean up. ZIEFEL: Mm. My only doubt is whether the Finns will want to exterminate their cockroaches. They are a nation with appalling self-control." (Brecht 1986, p.18)

253 Discussion No16 (Helsinki, 17.11.2003), with S a Nigerian living and working in Helsinki.

influencing space are political and the same could be claimed regarding the political space par excellence, the public spaces of a city.

4.4 THE RAILWAY JOURNEY

> "The journey was one that would now be made, probably, in a motorcar, which would be supposed to render it more interesting. We shall see too that, accomplished in such a way, it would even be in a sense more genuine, since one would be following more nearly, in a closer intimacy, the various contours by which the surface of the earth is wrinkled. But after all the special attraction of the journey lies not in our being able to alight at places on the way and to stop altogether as soon as we grow tired, but in its making the difference between departure and arrival not as imperceptible but as intense as possible, so that we are conscious of it in its totality, intact, as it existed in our mind when imagination bore us from the place in which we were living right to the very heart of a place we longed to see, in a single sweep which seemed miraculous to us not so much because it covered a certain distance as because it united two distinct individualities of the world, took us from one name to another name; and this difference is accentuated (more than in a form of locomotion in which, since one can stop and alight where one chooses, there can scarcely be said to be any point of arrival) by the mysterious operation that is performed in those peculiar places, railway stations, which do not constitute, so to speak, a part of the surrounding town but contain the essence of its personality just as upon their sign-boards they bear its painted name." (Proust 1934, p.489-90)[254]

Schivelbusch (1980) [1977] dedicates his book to the railway journey from its birth to its dominance in the urban imaginary.[255] He describes this extraordinary technological conjunction right in the midst of the industrial revolution and the changes it brought about regarding people's perception of the world. Schivelbusch explains that the socialisation process that technological innovations always require was omnipresent with the expansion of the railway journey. Urban behaviour has been largely shaped by the new habits and the *savoir-faire* cultivated by the passengers of the railways. Two of the most noteworth behavioural changes are the transition from the talkative journey with the horse-coach of pre-industrial Europe, to the quiet railway journey, all the way to our modern day restrained manners in public transport. This progression also points to the gradually increasing privacy that replaced the

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[254] Extract. Proust, M. (1934). *Remembrance of Things Past.* Vol. I. New York: Random House.

[255] I refer to Schivelbusch's argument that Haussmmanian Paris acquired streets straight as railroad tracks (Schivelbusch 1980, p.179).

more public nature of travelling. Simmel offers an interesting explanation about the rise of silence, and Schivelbusch seems to agree.

> "Before the buses, trains, and streetcars in the nineteenth century, people were quite unable to look at each other for minutes or hours at a time, or to be forced to do so, without talking to each other. Modern traffic increasingly reduces the majority of sensory relations between human beings to mere sight, and this must create entirely new premises for their general sociological feelings."[256]

Erving Goffman, analysing co-mingling in North American society, suggests that one should:

> "[…] extend the notion of territoriality into claims that function like territories but are not spatial." (Goffman 1972, p.29)

He examines those territories starting with "Personal Space" and the example he offers is telling. He refers to the claims we make concerning what we face, and what we claim as our personal space.

> "This is nicely illustrated in Eastern seaboard parlor cars designed with a wide, longitudinal aisle and single seats at intervals on either side, the seats arranged to swivel. When there is crowding, travellers maximize their "comfort" by turning their seats to exactly that direction that will allow the eyes, when oriented in the direction of the trunk, to gaze upon the least amount of passenger flesh. Standing passengers may crowd right up against the seats but in doing so will find themselves ringed in by two rows of backs. In ordinary railway or bus seating in America, passengers who feel overcrowded may be able to send their eyes out the window, thereby vicariously extending their personal space." (Goffman 1972, p.30)

The privatisation of train compartments in Europe was for Schivelbusch an expression of class discrimination. The American version of evolution of the the railway journey has to demonstrate a much more open (democratic?) and mobile arrangement of travelling, where passengers, for most of the 19th century, were able to walk and move around; unlike the compartmentalisation of bourgeois European passengers or lack of even the intimacy of compartments for the poorer European passengers of third and fourth class.[257] Nowadays, most

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256 Simmel 1908 p.650-1, cited in Schivelbusch 1980, p.80.

257 "Only privileged classes undergo this experience of no longer speaking to each other and being increasingly embarrassed by their companions. In the carriages of the third and fourth class, which mostly have not been divided into compartments but consist of one large space, there is neither embarrassed silence nor general perusal of reading matter." (Schivelbusch 1980, p.81)

of our train journeys induce immobility, and silence; they constitute occasions of in-between time dedicated to relaxation, or work. If these are only a few points concerning the railway journey in its early days, what about the spaces designed to cater to the experience before and after these journeys?

Railway Stations

Proust, in the preceding citation, writes of railway stations as mystical spaces, cut off from the city fabric that surrounds them. Schivelbusch explains why this was, and even nowadays often is, the case. Railway Stations around industrialised Europe were symbols of exactly that: in-dustrialisation. The railways were, after all, perceived as a transportation industry. While in the mid-nineteenth century already the swirl of modernity had prompted new forms of socio-spatial experience such as the market halls, the Bon Marché, department stores, the expo pavilions and more, nowhere else did the transit experience of traffic and flow seem better accommodated than in the Railway Stations (Schivelbusch 1980, p.162). The design of stations is indicative of the evolution of the railway journey itself, and more profoundly of the way people got, and get, encultured to faster and more advanced ways of travelling. When the railways were established throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century, connecting cities with cities and cities with the countryside, people were shocked. City folks had to deal with

> "[…] an abrupt entry of the industrial apparatus of the railway into the city […]" (Schivelbusch 1980, p.166)

To bring such an industrial use in to the cities required some kind of camouflage, and that was provided by the grand stone facades of most European Railway Stations.[258] These buildings provided the filter from the city to the railways; from the city to the metal and glass train halls. Railway Stations were sites of innovation of such magnitude and transformative force that people had to get accustomed to them. Therefore the reception halls were seen to provide a transitional zone between the city and the railway experience. The rationalised rail-way realm clashed with the medieval, pre-industrial city surrounding it. This clash wouldn't stand for long; soon after 1850s the medieval cores of cities would have to change and adapt to technological innovation and the new prospects the latter brought along. Slowly the stone reception buildings, as Schivelbusch (1980, p.166) writes, lost their filtering character. The

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258 About The station: "At the time of the completion for the railway station design, stone was the most highly prized facade material in Finland. With its associations with northern nature and firm bedrocks, granite has a particular appeal to Finns. The nation's principal railway station was given a granite face worthy of its function, while the office wing and express freight wing [West wing] were finished with rendering." (Högström 2004, p.27)

The first Railway Station in Helsinki, late 1800. The building was demolished in 1919. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

change affected also the train halls attached to the reception halls but shielded in order for the passengers not to have uncontrollable access to the trains. Between the reception halls and the train halls where the platforms were, the in-between waiting rooms accommodated the queues that formed before the doors opened for travellers to get to the trains. Around the 1860s, the two separate domains of the city and the trains, the reception and the train halls, were connected directly, relegating waiting rooms to a peripheral position. The reception hall turned into a concourse that now started to accommodate the bulk of travellers both as a traffic centre and as a waiting area. Soon after, waiting rooms were situated off the hustle and bustle of the traffic areas, leaving the reception halls to the flowing movement of travellers.

> "The new spatial arrangement quite obviously reflects a speeding-up of the process of spatial transition. The travellers' sojourn in the waiting room, that hiatus in the passage of traffic from city to railway, is perhaps the clearest indication of the station's function as a gateway. One might say that the pause was necessary to enable the traveller to cope with the change in the quality of space. However, now the change of space can be mastered in a continuous motion by merely walking through the reception hall (now the "concourse") and out onto the platforms- a further indication of the rapprochement between city space and railroad space. Direct access from the city to the railroad has become possible because the city itself, to paraphrase Lucae, has become as "frightening" (i.e., industrialized) in its aspect as the train hall." (Schivelbusch 1980, p.169)

Panoramic Travel

To my understanding, little have things changed in the organisational principles of railway stations from what the last citation describes of the end of nineteenth century railway experience. Surely, faster and faster trains, commuters replacing the long distance travellers, the decrease in transported goods, these and more changes have led to a spatial experience of fast transit; or to use Schivelbusch's (1980, p.57-72) description, of "panoramic travel." Panoramic travel stands for the travel experience facilitated by fast-moving vehicles, and points to the accelerated impressions that one has to deal with when travelling in high speed through a landscape. The landscape 'moves' as fast as the train, and our impression of it becomes less and less detailed and more of a whole, i.e. *panoramic*. The increase in stimulus is capable of causing stress, so ways have been developed to relieve the tension, we *stare* and don't *look* outside the window, we read books or newspapers, we close our eyes, or we appreciate the good luck to be travelling with an interesting friend. The point here is that the journeys are panoramic; our perception of urban space has likewise become sharply fragmented in a single glance.

> "The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the *intensification of nervous stimulation* which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. Man is a differentiated creature. His mind is stimulated by the difference between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it. Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts-all these use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions. These are the psychological conditions which the metropolis creates." (Simmel 1967, p.410)[259]

Towards the very end of *The Railway Journey*, Schivelbusch discusses the influence of the institutionalisation of fast traffic on people's perceptions of city life. He mentions the bourgeois who were the most regular passengers; however, the changes were astonishing regarding the acceleration of the pace of everyday life for everyone. The Baudelairean flâneur eventually rises once more as a figure of the Parisian gazer. In Schivelbusch's (1980, p.189) understanding, the flâneur in the age of industrialisation is "no longer a true one;" instead he is somewhat of a caricature to remind people then, and nowadays, that 'fast' is not the necessary mode of leading one's life, literally or metaphorically.

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[259] Simmel, G. (1967). *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Translated and edited by K. H. Wolff. New York: Free Press.

A Station as Social Space

"Unhappily those marvellous places which are railway stations, from which one sets out to remote destinations, are tragic places also, for if in them the miracle is accomplished whereby scenes which hitherto have had no existence save in our minds are to become the scenes among which we shall be living, for that very reason we must, as we emerge from the waiting-room, abandon any thought of finding ourself once again within the familiar walls which, but a moment ago, were still enclosing us. We must lay aside all hope of going home to sleep in our own bed, once we have made up our mind to penetrate into the pestiferous cavern through which we may have access to the mystery, into one of those vast, glass-roofed sheds, like that of Saint-Lazare into which I must go to find the train for Balbec, and which extended over the rent bowels of the city one of those bleak and boundless skies, heavy with an accumulation of dramatic menaces, like certain skies painted with an almost Parisian modernity by Mantegna or Veronese, beneath which could be accomplished only some solemn and tremendous act, such as a departure by train or the Elevation of the Cross." (Proust 1934, p.490)[260]

My reference to Schivelbusch, apart from its slightly historical ambition, serves my effort to understand the nature of the Railway Station as such. Schivelbusch provides us primarily with social outcomes of an evolution as radical as was the railway. A characteristic element of the management and the resulting design processes involving the Helsinki Railway Station is the persistent view of it as primarily a circulation centre wherein no obstacles are tolerated.

"The fears of touching which gave rise to the Venetian Ghetto have been strengthened in modern society as individuals create something like ghettos in their own bodily experience when confronted with diversity. Speed, escape, passivity: this triad is what the new urban environment has made of Harvey's discoveries."(Sennett 2002, p.366)

"The planning of nineteenth-century cities aimed to create a crowd of freely moving individuals, and to discourage the movement of organized groups through the city. Individual bodies moving through urban space gradually became detached from the space in which they moved, and from the people the space contained. As space became devalued through motion, individuals gradually lost a sense of sharing a fate with others." (Sennett 2002, p.323)

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[260] Extract. Proust, M. (1934). *Remembrance of Things Past*.
Vol. I. New York: Random House.

The additional commodification of such a space, which as Schivelbusch shows goes hand in hand with the acceleration of the perception of our fragmented world "in a single glance," works against its public character. The definition of what and who constitutes an obstacle can be highly disputable in regard to social justice. Insisting on the technocratic nature of a Railway Station, the authorities basically want to regulate our bodies and minds so as to maintain the unobstructed mechanical flow of circulation. What is permitted as acceptable is worthy publicity, of a place in the public; privacy ostracised provides an easy, though vague, forbidding code. It isn't, then, much of a surprise when there is so much attention paid by the authorities to sleeping in public. As Don Mitchell (2000, 2003a) has shown, the dichotomy between public and private always proves handy for authorities persecuting the 'Other.' We all take part in this power struggle over what we tolerate and allow, what we are indifferent to or appreciate in public. The common parlance of the media, the top-down regulations, the unwritten rules of behaviour, all may and do provide excuses for the oppression of certain groups of urbanites. Deviance is expelled and the fear of the mob and hysteria once again pervades urban public space. The notion of social space is admirably elaborated by Lefebvre; however, how this space can be realised in the urban public domain remains a challenge. Accepting the social attributes of public space seems threatening to the authorities of this space.

Social space seems unmanageable, threatening, and according to some feminist scholars, it becomes *feminine*.[261] The rationalisation of everyday life finds its best fora in the public domain. The railway schedule and the necessity of harmonising the markets brought time zoning;[262] stations today still function on that rationale of regulating people's time and rhythms, and ultimately their bodies. In such a regime, social space becomes at best a commodity to sell in the various cafés and fast-food enterprises that monopolise seating in a place like the Helsinki Railway Station. Proust lyrically describes the emotionally charged spaces of train stations; we are doing everything in our power to cynically suppress any emotional, not to say tragic, character of these places. The nature of journeys changes, and so does the nature of stations; how radically have people changed? Detached, we are encouraged to accomplish our routine journeys in stations where the human is *watchfully* housed, where sensibilities are inefficient.

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261 See Duncan (1996); Massey (1994); Valentine (1996); Wilson (1991).

262 Schivelbusch explains that the division of the world into time zones has been a necessary development driven by the railway journey.
"Yet railroad time is not accepted as anything but schedule time until late in the century[19th]. As the rail network grows denser, incorporating more and more regions, the retention of local times becomes untenable: in 1880, railroad time becomes general standard time in England. In Germany, official recognition comes in 1893; as early as 1884, an international conference on time standards, held in Washington, D.C., divided the world into time zones." (Schivelbusch 1980, p.50)
Högström (2004, p.37) writes that the time in Helsinki and all the country was synchronised to St Petersburg since 1890, while in 1921 Finnish time was set to be two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1922. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki Railway Station,1928. Courtesy Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.
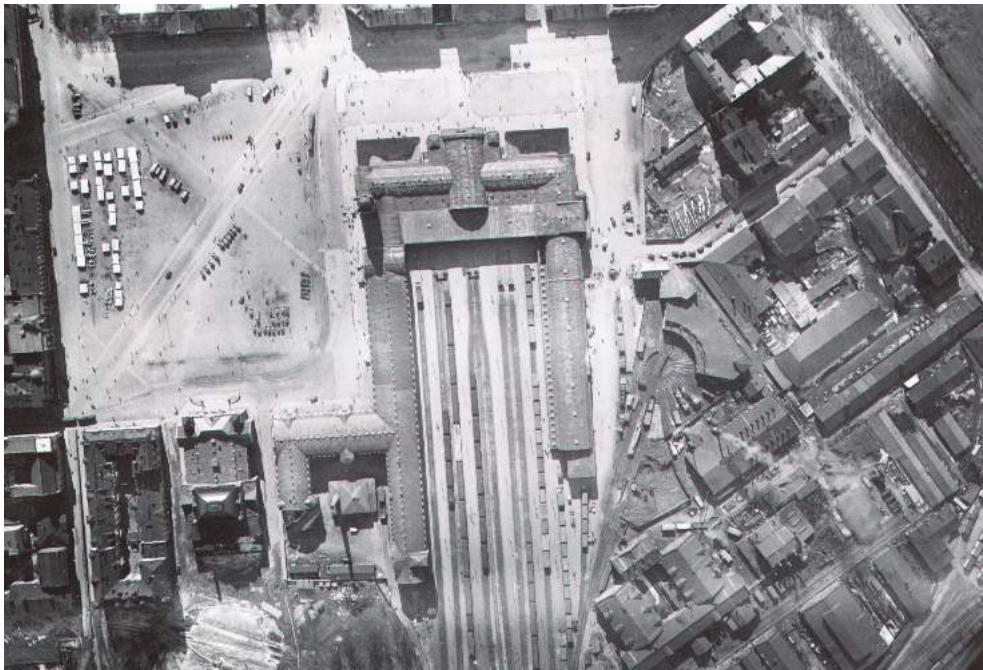
4.5 HELSINKI RAILWAY STATION [263]

Matti Klinge and Laura Kolbe (1999) in their history of Helsinki refer to the building of the Finnish railways and of the station, and adjoining square. Here I will elaborate on a few points of importance, but most of all relate to the evolution of the character of the station.

It is in 1862 that we had the first railway line in Finland, while the first railway station was built a year earlier.[264] In a life span of forty years, the station was proved inadequate to serving its purpose in a fast growing city like Helsinki. Finnish architectural bodies announced an architectural competition for a new building. In 1904 the renowned architect Eliel Saarinen won the competition. His winning plans proved to be too romantic and caused an outcry among some of his colleagues, who wished for a modern, less ornamented and more robust building to represent Finnish architecture nationally and internationally.[265] The building inaugurated in 1919, just after the First World War, was actually a complex: the main station with halls catering to the circulation of large numbers of people, an office building, and the accentuated monumental clock tower.[266]

The building of Helsinki Railway Station as part of the development of the city itself was a calculated process orchestrated by the government and investors, while the railway administration had set the design agenda and on certain issues opposed Saarinen's ideas.[267] Helsinki as the administrative capital didn't grow naturally; it was a project of national importance. The latter statement may be arguable; my point, though, is this: in many European

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263 I will be referring to the Helsinki Railway Station as the station.

264 See Klinge & Kolbe (1999, p. 62), and Högström (2004, p.11).

265 We must remember that "The golden age of Finnish art was the period of Art Nouveau, which in Finland took the form of a harmonious blend of European culture and local popular tradition." (Pansera 2006, p.31) This is also the period that will lead to the Functionalism of the late twenties. It is a crucial period for Finland and of course crucial for Finnish design and architecture.
"Then came the era of Functionalism (late twenties and early thirties), whose message was received as 'coherence of function', 'technique' (in which area lots of new research and experimentation took place), 'social equality' (also interpreted as 'beauty for all' through industrial production), all values in which the ancient peasant tradition recognised itself." (Pansera 2006, p.31-2)
"This was to deal the final deathblow to the 'Finnish style' as manifested at the turn of the century. For Saarinen personally, 1904 was a crucial turning point in his development from romantic to rationalist." (Hausen 1990, p.164)

266 Klinge & Kolbe (1999, p.67) write that the building was completed in 1914. Högström (2004, p.15) writes that even

in 1919, the year of its inauguration, the interiors of the station were yet to be finished. The tower of the station and its clock has been a trademark of the landscape of Helsinki. In accordance to how Schivelbusch explained the importance of time for the railways, the station has its clock high enough; time conquers all, to paraphrase the Latin *amor vincit omnia*. The German clockwork was installed in 1922 by Siemens-Schukert (Högström 2004, p.33).

267 At the time that we are discussing Finland was still under the rule of the Russian Emperor. The station was designed with a special entrance for the emperor – later to be used for the Finnish presidents – which Nikolai II used only once in 1915 (Klinge & Kolbe 1999, p.67). For six centuries and up until 1809, Finland was a part of the Swedish kingdom as a Grand Duchy. Finnish citizens shared the same rights as the Swedish. After 1809, Finland became part of the Russian Empire, as a result of the 1808-9 War. Under Russian rule, Finland as a "[...] Grand Duchy was recognised to be autonomous, allowing it a large measure of self-government based on the Swedish law and administrative system." (Bell and Hietala 2002, p.13)
Eventually, and given the uprising against the Tsar's rule in Russia, Finland declared its independence on the 6th of December 1917. And Helsinki, which had been chosen by Alexander I to be the capital of Finland already in 1812, re-

Helsinki Railway Station, 1915. A military hospital at the station during WW I. Visit by Tsar Nikolai. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki Railway Station, 29.7.1975. The Russian president Leonid Brezhnev visiting the ETYK-conference. The Station was closed; only the international press was allowed in the platfrom area. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

states the railways cut through pre-industrial often medieval city cores,[268] while in Helsinki no such core existed. The station buildings – the old and the current – as well as the adjacent square were

> "[…] built close to the shallow, boggy bay, Kluuvinlahti, and piles were driven into the bay itself so that this could be converted into an open square."
> (Klinge and Kolbe 1999, p. 63)

The buildings that framed the Railway Square (Rautatientori) were built purposefully grand and more important-looking, suitable to an environment that oozed power, national identity and pride. The station, austere and monumental, was the quintessence of Helsinki, capital of the sovereign Finnish state.[269]

The station has been a political stage of national magnitude, up until the fall of the communist regime in the Soviet Union. Politicians and national delegations met in the station. After the collapse of the USSR, and the iron curtain, the station no longer functions as a political scene where Finnish and Russians politicians depart and arrive. Nowadays, the station is managed as a private company offering public service. The public halls of the station function under an ambiguous regime; at the same time, there is the increasing recognition of the station as the city's symbolic living room, and a highly regularised space. This ambiguous character does not necessarily lead to a problematic contradiction, as Loretta Lees shows regarding the public space of the street.[270] Instead it is possible that this ambiguity nourishes the publicness of the station as a social ground.

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mained the capital of the new Finnish nation state (Klinge and Kolbe 1999, p.151).

"The station building involved many problems, the design of the elevations not necessarily being the most complex. Obviously, the main difficulty was to provide expansion margin. The railway administration insisted on a U-shape, though Saarinen wanted to leave the western flank open to allow for later expansion. Hence, he produced designs for an express goods office on the west side of the tracks very unwillingly." (Hausen 1990, p.164)

268 I refer here to Schivelbusch as quoted earlier.

269 Högström (2004) mentions often that all the building materials for the station came from Finland, which most of the exterior and interior fittings and furnishing were designed and produced in Finland, and of course the four standing men sculpted in granite and flanking the main entrance of the station are symbols of the enduring Finnish *sisu* (guts). The Godfather of the station was Eliel Saarinen and his total design for the station can be traced all through the building in countless details. It is worth noticing here that in that epoch design was still considered to be integrated in architecture, and architects were the grand masters who could liberally involve in designing everything with aesthetic value; from a building to a coffee table.

270 "For the public space of the street is not pregiven, in either its form or its meaning, It is produced through contestation and social negotiation. […] it might be said that the street is there for the making (Gosss, 1996). It is always a site of control and contestation. Make of it what you will." (Lees 1998, p. 250-1)

Makasiinit

I would like to briefly refer to a building, part of the Railway facilities, the legendary Makasiinit (in English warehouses). This ∏ shaped building complex from 1899 was a storage space for goods arriving and leaving Helsinki.[271] In 1987 the Makasiinit were no longer serving the railways and in 1990 their career started as a multipurpose nucleus right in front of the Finnish parliament.[272] Maybe the *first event* space of Helsinki accustomed urbanites[273] to do-it-yourself urbanism and grass root urban activism. The authorities tried to impose order on the site of Makasiinit that seemed disorderly and unsuitable for a metropolitan centre. Devotees to Makasiinit, the authorities – including the City Planning Office, the City, and corporate capital – all took part in disputes, negotiations, planning, setting agendas, competitions, legal disputes; until finally and dramatically, a blazing fire quickly swallowed most of Makasiinit in 2006. The decision had been made before the fire; the site was to be used for the construction of a new Music Hall. The fire gave an abrupt solution to the long dispute. Makasiinit are dead… long live Makasiinit![274] As Lehtovuori meticulously describes, the process of negotiating the site of Makasiinit as a *successful* urban public space gave in to a kind of politics. The power struggle deriving from *official* planning and the will to perpetuate the power structures was evident too.[275]

 This brief account on Makasiinit is not intended as a kind of commemoration. I personally had visited the site on a few occasions for a flee market, a party, an exhibition, and a concert. Nevertheless, it was evident to me that despite the eventual commercialisation of Makasiinit, their dynamic potential, the insurgency of this in-your-face institution right across from the parliament was positively powerful. Makasiinit were furthermore the disappearing part of the station complex. I realise that the station shrank into what it is today; understandably the valuable land in the centre of Helsinki *has* to make profit, symbolically and materially. Therefore, the process that started almost fifty years ago – when the authorities decided to dismantle the platforms, rail tracks, and engineering facilities around the express freight depot at the west wing of the station, and opened the area up to the public[276] – somehow it

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271 Lehtovuori (2005, p.251).

272 ibid., p.201, 212.

273 Lehtovuori (2004, p. 216) refers to the Human Wall demonstration of September 17th 2000, when 7.000-8.000 people circled Makasiinit to protest against the politicians, and Helsinki City planners' ideas. I realise the political importance of such a movement. I would like to know, though, how many non-Finnish urbanites were involved in that protest, the biggest ever, as Lehtovuori says, on issues of urban planning. Similarly to other controversial city sites, Makasiinit too, were presented as primarily concerning Finns; maybe more than not, the educated, artists, activists, students, architects, planners and social scientists.

274 Actually a part of the complex survived the fire and, reinforced, will remain on the site, sadly dislocated or successfully incorporated; this remains to be seen.

275 Read more in the doctoral dissertation of Lehtovuori, P. (2005). *Experience and Conflict. The Dialectics of the Production of Public Urban Space in the Light of New Events Venues in Helsinki 1993-2003*. Espoo: Centre of Urban and Regional Studies Publications.

276 Högström (2004, p. 71).

seems to me that came to an end with the demolition of Makasiinit. Suddenly, the summer when Makasiinit were burning, I realised, as Lehtovuori writes, that:

> "Makasiinit are a document of the industrialisation of Helsinki […]"
> (Lehtovuori 2005, p.251)

Therefore, all that is left from that era is the main building of the Helsinki Railway Station complex. The history of the site has dissolved and the station stands today as a sort of Finnish relic, cleaned up and polished, not to mention policed. The station was not designed as it nowadays stands, and the area around it, partly closed to the public, could very well have initiated the perpetual dark reputation of the station. I misunderstood what AR, a Finnish author, told me during our discussion, that the station in Helsinki has never been a "slum" area; the station was designed purposefully. AR also said that the Kaisaniemi Park has always being ill reputed, lending its reputation to the neighbouring station.[277]

With no signs of the station site in its full complexity, I imagined that indeed the location couldn't be a *slum*, especially with all the monumental buildings embracing the Railway Square at the east of the station. Maybe after all, like most Railways Stations in the world, this one too, had *dark* territories of its own, or adjacent ones. The area hasn't been a *slum*; however, its reputation as a dangerous station may stem from those dark sites that are no longer present, or that have been smartened up. The mythology of the dangerous station may be a sign of its historical discontinuity as a site. This kind of fear feeds better on absent territories that were ill reputed, whose location and function we ignore. All that is left is the current station, basically a commercial administrative centre and a traffic hub, to which are ascribed all the psychological consequences of everything that is happening in and around it. In this process of ascription, as I understand it, the social aspect of the station disappears, or looses importance.

A Living Room

When I first read that Helsinki's centre is the nation's living room, I imagined that the station was the physical evidence. The claim came from the official city planning office; therefore, it identified the authorities' aspirations for the city centre. One of the office's actual objectives for 1996 leading up to the new millennium was entitled "A Cultural Living Room," and I wonder how the station fits into this picture.[278] I don't have an answer; however, I can say that at the

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[277] Discussion No43 (Helsinki, 20.2.2006), with AR a Finnish author.

[278] I am referring to: Helsinki City Planning Department/ Master Plan Unit. (1996). *Strategic Planning Advice 1995,* *Towards 2000 and the New Millenium. Meeting of the City Council 18.9.1996.* Helsinki City Planning Department Publications, 1996:21 ENG.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1964. The Main Hall. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. The Mail Hall.

centre of the "Cultural Living Room" of Helsinki there stands a monument of architectural, historical and cultural value, whose character as a transportation hub overshadows its social richness and potential. In fact the cultural aspect of this transportation hub masks the commercialisation of the station. It is crucial to understand that being reactionary towards the commercialisation of such an important city space is not an aim in itself; it is the richness of the social space, of a diverse urban living-together that the authorities of the station seem unable to make peace with and work with. To conceive this social aspect and its inherent diversity as an asset and not as an unruly disturbance, seems to me to be a great challenge.

The Station Changing

Högström (2004), in his illustrated historical account of the station, describes hoe quite early on the station was appreciated as a promising commercial field. It is interesting that before 1922 the two big waiting rooms flanking the Central Hall were divided according to travel-class and therefore by social class, too. First and second class in the east room while the third class travellers were in the west. There was only a humble cafeteria in the east room. According to the moral norms of that period and the trends of all major stations, there was a segregated ladies' waiting area in the east room. This situation changed starting from 1922, when the catering for all the station was handed over to a private restauranteur. Each room acquired a restaurant of a different class. In the east waiting room and restaurant the ambiance, service, prices and clientele were first and second class. While architectonically the west room was a mirror image of the east room, the third class restaurant and waiting facilities there were a modest translation of the east ones. Similarly to the first and second-class area, a ladies' waiting room for the third-class travellers was offered in the west room. In the 1950s the third-class facilities closed down and the west room was turned into a ticket sale and information hall. With periodic improvements, this is how the west room of the Central Hall has functioned uo to todat. More restaurants were to be established in different areas of the station, until the current days' transformation of a large area of the station into a commercial space with fast-food and café chains, and a few small shops. The commercial buzz, it is true, is not so much apparent in the Central Hall; which to me, though, seems peculiarly squeezed inbetween commercialisation and flows.[279]

    The Concourse is a vital passage through the complex of the station. It is adjacent to the original station and it was intented to be part of the station. Saarinen had designed a vaulted

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[279] Concerning the consumerism pervading public spaces Zukin writes:
"In cities from New York to North Adams, from Orlando to Los Angeles, economic growth has been thematized and envisioned as an image of collective leisure and consumption. As part of the process, collective space – public space – has been represented as a consumable good. Even when it is not bought and paid for, as at Disney World, public space has been joined with retail space, promoting privatized, corporate values." (Zukin 1995, p.260)
"Bryant Park and Disney World and Sony Plaza dominate the collective imagination. They dominate through their control of space and their colonization of time. They have exhausted the imagination of what public space can be: it is a vision of civility, bounded by commercial consumption." (Zukin 1995, p.262)

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. The main concourse with the shops.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1959. The main concourse. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

280 The next part on *Olohuone* deals extensively with the West Hall

281 "Another dispute issue was the great glass roof above the tracks that Saarinen designed back in December 1904 and which he continued to develop in his 1908 and 1909 proposals. In the competition the railway administration had proposed a low vaulted roof, probably in stainless metal sheeting, with a row of glass skylights down the middle. Saarinen's glass roof was partly opposed for economic reasons, it would seem, and partly for fear of problems with snow." (Hausen 1990, p.164-166)

hall of iron and glass, just like other stations in the world, to cover the main platform, the individual platforms and the tracks. The plans were never realised. Instead, in 1925, a canopy was build to cover the main platform area, which was left open towards the main platform. When this structure burned down in 1950 the current enclosed hall of reinforced-concrete was built. This structure adjacent to Saarinen's station bears little relation to it; it was designed by the Board of Railways disregarding Saarinen's original plans, and filled with stands and kiosks because of which people refer to this part of the station as the Kiosk Hall (Högström 2004, p.63). This concourse connects the Central Hall, the platforms, the West Hall, the east entrance and consequently the Railway Square to the east of the station.[280]

In fact this neuralgic space gives to the station a sense of being a complex building, a whole. It is not what I would call an attractive area; it is rather a degrading transition from the Central Hall to the platforms. On the other hand it is a very busy concourse where people – commuters, long distance travellers, tourists, Finns and foreigners, young and elderly people – literally brush shoulders with each other. Furthermore, because this hall functions as an East-West axis passage connecting the Railway Square and Elielinaukio (Eliel Square), both bustling squares in the centre of the city, it is at times busier than the Central Hall.

Next to this concourse, the main platform remained uncovered and exposed to the Finnish winter until 2001.[281] Then a glass and steel structure was constructed to cover most of the platforms. The covered main platform is today partly given over to commercial use, with tables and chairs for the cafés and restaurants.

Central Hall
Restaurant Eliel
Ticket-sale & Information Service Hall
West Hall
East Hall
Main Concourse " Kiosk Hall"
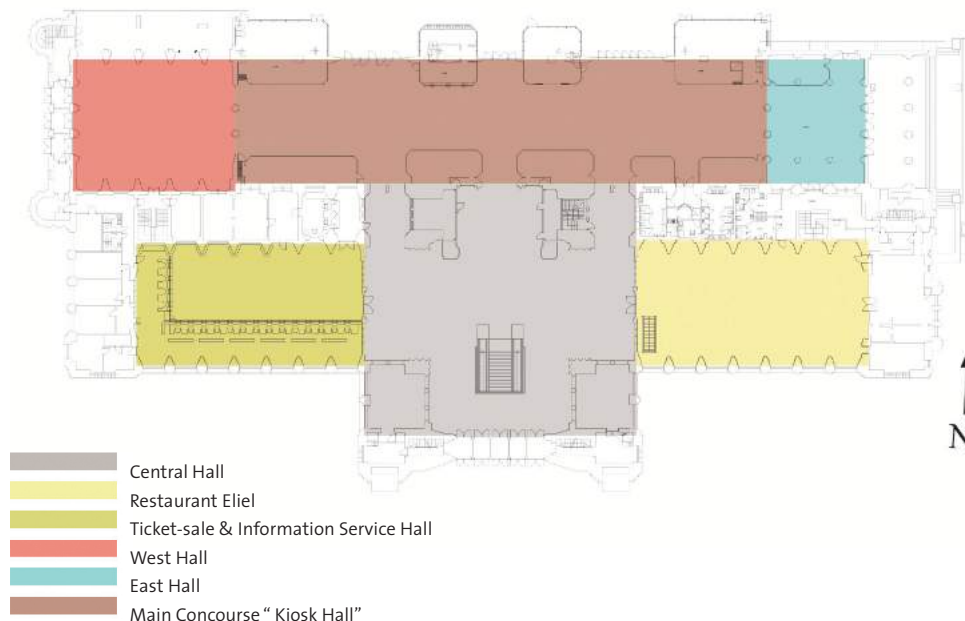
Diagram of the main building of the Helsinki Railway Station. The original plan is courtecy of the Finnish Railways VR.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. The main concourse.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1926. The 2nd class restaurant. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1948. Freight trains where nowadays stands the Elielinaukio square. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki, 2003. Skateboarders at Elielinaukio.

Commodification

> "In order to gain better understanding of the cultural potentials of the diversity of places in the urban field we must give more thought to the way in which spatial coherence is experienced. We must look for cultural meaning. This is the domain of a cultural geography, a geography that is concerned with the semantics of the spatial. A cultural geography shifts the focus away from the analysis of the functionality of 'spaces' that are quasi-acultural to the space as a system of 'places' with specific meanings for specific groups." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.33)

> "A functional-spatial analysis leaves no room for the many ways in which meanings are etched in the landscape. On the other hand, the increased attention for the cultural meaning of places is generally nostalgic in tone and static by nature."
> (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.36)

The station is basically a transportation hub. Therefore the primary aim for the board of directors is to secure the easy and safe handling of the mobility of people and products. The management of the station, in an effort to recognize and in a way show respect to the social character of the building, offers the West Hall as an exhibition and events place for the public. In this way this part of the station is not strictly monofunctional. This is not simply a place of flux where people and goods are mobile. It is not so much a place of commerce, as shopping activity is at a minimum compared with other areas of the station. And, finally, it can host various ambiances according to the events or exhibitions allowed to take place. This said, it should be stressed that the kind of events for which permission can be obtained depends greatly on the persuasive power of the event organizers and on the degree of security the station management requires. The management wants to make sure that an event will not cause any great disturbance to the principal function of the station, which is the transportation of people and goods.

Another function of the station, however, is the 'transportation' of ideas. This is a building of Finnish national heritage and protected as such; in addition, it is a high value marketable commodity; especially after the station building came under the responsibility of the real estate management of the Finnish Railways Group of Companies. The Finnish Railways were a revised type of public enterprise before 1994 when they were turned into a corporation, in order to increase competitiveness in the transportation market. Currently the station building is a place where a several meters-long banner of H&M (international fashion chain) can be conveniently on display at the main hall. What I am getting at is this: although the authorities of the station eagerly stress transportation as the basic function of the station, especially when discussing its role as a place of socio-cultural exchange and meetings, they nevertheless hire the private advertising company 'Clear Channel Outdoor,' to assist in turning the station into

a more resourceful commodity.

These seemingly two contrasting strategies are actually not at odds at all. In fact it is the most effective way for the authorities to increase the commodification and profitability of the station by filling up the space with promotional commercial banners and minimizing the possible friction that could occur should the socio-cultural exchange get too intense. The more the "flux" concept of people moving unhindered through the station overwrites the socio-cultural aspect of the station, where people meet and discuss, and even appropriate as a place to meet others (like *islands* in a sea of flux), the more the potential for aggressive manifestations of social problems will diminish, while the commercial value of the station will increase. It is also understandable that hiring private security services at the station has considerably jeopardised its public character. There seems to be a reassurance of communality with the presence of the old fashioned Police. This communality seems lost in regard to a system that trains private guards and feeds itself with an aggressiveness similar to the one of the aggressors.

Schedules

> "Consider, for example, the modernist system of traffic circulation. When we analyze it in terms of what it systematically set out to abolish - the traditional street system of public spaces, which was considered too congested and unhealthy for the modern machine age - its social consequence becomes clear. By eliminating this kind of street, it also eliminates the urban crowds and the outdoor political domain of social life that the street traditionally supports. Alienated from and fearful of the no-man's land of outdoor public space that results, people stay inside. But the consequent displacement of social life from the outdoor public "rooms" of streets and squares to the indoor rooms of malls, homes, and cars does not merely reproduce the outdoor city public and its citizenry in a new interior setting. Rather, this interiorization encourages a privatizing of social relations. Privatization allows greater control over access to space, and that control almost invariably stratifies the public that uses it." (Holston 1998, p. 44-5)

The privatisation Holston talks about echoes the privatisation of time and space that takes place at the station. To my understanding, the uncertainty of the right to use services and spaces in the station between 01:30 and 05:00 enhances the stratification of the public.
The station, like any public building, has a strict operating schedule with opening and closing hours. This might be a simple statement, however, it is a different story if one wants to find out this schedule. First of all is it one schedule? On the main entrance doors to the station and the Central Hall there is a small blue sign with white letters informing the public that the sta-

Helsinki Railway Station, 2005.

tion is open every day from 05:00 in the morning until 01:30 after midnight. The other two entrances to the station, east towards the Railway Square and West towards the Eliel Square, carry no such signs. The Eliel café-restaurant, at the east of the Central Hall, is open during weekdays and on Saturdays between 08:00 and 23:00, and on Sundays between 10:00 and 22:00. At the opposite side stands the Ticket Sales Hall with its automatic doors. It is a big hall, surrounded by a long continuous help desk with numbered widows; behind each of which sits a VR staff member to provide services mostly to long distance and international travellers. The Ticket Sales Hall is open from 10:00 until 21:30 while the services are provided every day from 10:00 until 18:00. There are ticket sale desks in the Central Hall too open every day from 06:30 to 21:30. The Tourist Information Office in the Central Hall is open from 09:00 to 18:00 on weekdays and from 09:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays, while on Sundays it is closed. There are public toilets in the station's main concourse. The charge for using the toilets is one euro, which is the same that most cafés and restaurants charge non customers for the use of their lavatories. The schedule for the toilets is nowhere to be seen; however the toilets are open for the public from Monday to Thursday between 6.00 and 23.30, on Friday between 6.00 and 01.00, and Saturday and Sunday between 07:00 and 01:00.[282] The kiosks, cafés and a few take-aways, which are housed in the Main concourse as well as in the East and the West Halls, have different and rarely displayed schedules. In the East Hall there is the Cigar shop and the Pullman Bar. These are open from Monday to Wednesday between 12:00 and 24:00, while Thursday to Saturday they are open from 12:00 till 01:00. Sundays they are closed. The R-Kiosk (chain) at the main concourse has a schedule announcement that informs the public that the shop is open from 06:15 till 22:45 during weekdays, from 07:30 to 22:45 on Saturdays and from 08:00 until 22:45 on Sundays. The staff at Robert's café (chain) told me that the café is open Monday to Saturday from 06:30 to 21:00, and on Sunday from 07:30 to 21:00. In the West Hall the R-Kiosk has a slightly different schedule from the R-Kiosk in the main concourse. The locker room under the West Hall is open every day between 05:00 and 01.30.

This account of the schedules dictating public accessibility of the various areas of the station indicates a multifunctional space. Our station is understandably much more than a transportation hub. I want to emphasise that by clustering the temporal continuum of the station, and the life that unfolds within it, a privatisation has been accomplished. The more

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282 Pekka Palonen (VR, pers. communication, 11 January 2007).

commercialisation infiltrates the station, the more the social life it shelters becomes a mere exchange of monetary value while the publicness of the space dissolves under time schedules and regimes of ordering our lives and bodies. From the electronic boards with the train time-tables, to the timetables of all the independent services offered at the station, the time at the station is strictly not ours. Administering time zones at the station regulates our accessibility to the space and often in an ambiguous way.

Benches

In the station there are two cafés with toilets available for their customers (depending on the staff's definition of a customer). There are four more cafés and take-away restaurants with resting facilities of different kinds meant for customer use. There is a horse-show shaped bench around the escalators connecting the main hall to the underground level.[283] The station authorities ameliorated the benches in the year 2000: bronze bars were added on the benches so that people, e.g. inebriates, couldn't lie down on them. This also solved the problem

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. The Central Hall.

[283] Known as *tunneli* where there are shops and from which one can access the metro platforms down below.

of proximity between people who may not like the fact that while sitting and waiting for their train an undesirable, or simply a stranger, could squeeze next to them within breathing distance. To just go and sit down in the empty space between two bronze bars and next to a fellow stranger is almost like a violation of the 'private space' of the one already sitting.

> "Temporary tenancy is perceived to be involved, measured in seconds, minutes, or hours, informally exerted, raising constant questions as to when the claim begins and when it terminates. Park benches and restaurant tables are examples."
> (Goffman 1972, p.29)

> "An ambiguity results, because there is no well-established principle to order the sequence in which various claimants, already ensconced, will be obliged to give up their exclusiveness. A field is thus opened for personal enterprise."
> (Goffman 1972, p.34)

Erving Goffman (1972, p.29, 34) attaches a certain ambiguity to benches in public and semi-public spaces. A person sitting on a bench has no ownership of it but rather a temporary right to use the facility of that bench. When benches are designed to be divided and accommodate a certain number of individuals per unit, there occurs the ambivalence of needing to decide next to whom one is going to sit. Therefore, the right earlier mentioned, or rather claim, as Goffman puts it, is conditional and disputable, and enhances the ambiguity of any public or semi-public space, including that of our station.

In the west of the Central Hall[284] of the station there is the Ticket Hall with benches and chairs for long-distance travellers. The central area of the hall functions as a waiting room with approximately eight wooden benches. In this hall there are four recently designed two-side-sitters with a low back-rest/divider, and four older wooden benches lining the wall. There are also a few upholstered chairs; maybe the only ones providing comfortable sitting for a longer time. This is a place where one can see elderly men (homeless?) sitting and maybe reading, dressed poorly but relatively clean and having next to their feet plastic bags filled with their necessities.

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[284] "The Central Hall, lighted by an arched window facing south, is the station's bustling hub. In the early days, travellers bought their tickets near the main entrance on Kaivokatu, left their luggage at the reception counter at the back of the hall [Högström later writes that between 1919 and 1978, luggage checking took place in the Central Hall], then hurried on to the platforms or sat down in one of the waiting rooms on either side of the hall to await the train's departure. The waiting rooms were later converted into restaurants, and the Central Hall took over their former function. Its character became that of a bustling transit area when the luggage reception was transferred to the west Wing in 1978 and direct access to the platforms was opened up for the public from the middle of the hall." (Högström 2004, p.39)
In a photo from 1960s accompanying this text by Högström we see in the Central Hall, now largely a circulation area, tens of chairs for passengers.
Discussion No23 (Helsinki, 7.4.2004), with Z a member of the staff of Finnish Railways.

This account of sitting and resting facilities on offer at the public areas of the ground floor of the station, to my understanding demonstrates that there are inadequate sitting and resting facilities for non-consumers. Therefore, reposing is not a programmed function of the station. The station as a living room for the city, however, needs more facilities like benches for public use, as a free service offered to the urbanites of this city, as well as to commuters and travellers.

"*People tend to sit most where there are places to sit*. […] The most attractive fountains, the most striking designs, cannot induce people to come and sit if there is no place to sit." (Whyte 1980, p.28)

Helsinki, 2003. Helsinki Railway Station, tickets hall.

Fragments of Life in the Station

"[…] public in the sense of being non-claimable." (Goffman 1972, p.51)

Reversing Goffman's statement, one could say that public is what is claimable by all. Still, at this moment, and while writing these words, I cannot decide on a comprehensive model of publicness for the station (or Omonia Square). The public and private condi-

The Finnish Railway Station, 1914. Waiting at the platform. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki railway Station, 1962. Train to Russia. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collectiosn), Hyvinkää.

tions are better seen as relational. Within the station there are plenty of areas, zones, or rooms, with varying degrees of publicness, privacy, or accessibility; an ambivalent urban ground. I am interested in all the corners of the station, and the lives that unfold there. My interests are particularly focused on the people who one way or another are not supposed to be spending their time in the station. There are explicit regulations and even unofficial codes of publicness, varying according to mentalities, vague policies and a general concept of policing.

When I observe the life unfolding in the station's public areas, my attention is attracted by certain people who use the space somehow against the unwritten but still effective codes of the *savoir faire* of this place. This is a circulation space; if one wants to hang around, her/his options are limited. Still, I have observed in the past, and still see when I pass by, the *islands* of foreigners in the Central Hall, standing and chatting. If a group gets too large it is very likely to attract the attention of the security guards who will firmly ask them to disperse. Few would claim their rights as citizens, legal migrants, EU citizens, Common Wealth citizens, or refugees.

> "Somalis have the habit of appointing a 'watering-hole' around which they congregate, where they stand in groups of all ages, many of them well dressed, and boasting the aspects of a recently fed youth. You rarely find women among these groups of men. Maybe this atavistic idea has its origins in the psyche of the Somali nomads, who took their cattle to a well, where, after months of being cut off from everyone else, the camel herdsmen met others of his kind, with whom he exchanged news. This way, the nomads learnt where the grass was aplenty, or were given news about clan warfare. They might even pick up a newly composed poem, or might be told that the woman they had intended to take as a wife had married."(Farah 2000, p.173)

My interview with a staff member of the station reaffirms my observations about the ambivalence surrounding the presence of foreigners in the station.

> Author: Do you notice that the people standing are mostly foreigners?
> AC: Yes, yes, they are plenty of them, but I think it's …Ok it's like … what I believe, I haven't been studying this but… I believe that in their culture that they are carrying on, they have this custom that they are grouped together and like spending time together, and they are doing it partially in the station. So it's like…
> Author: How do Finns feel about these people standing?
> AC: Well I think that most of the people don't see it that way. They see it like they are spending their air or something, very negative. But not all, not all, and I think this… all the time more and more people maybe understand better. I don't know, it's like when

you have a group of persons who have black skin and they are walking in the station, maybe there are some persons who are looking at them, like, maybe a quick glance, and go around them [...][285]

A and B, two Nigerian students in Helsinki, try to make sense of the policing of the station.

A: Yes, because what I have noticed in the train station – the upper level not the underground – in the train station, is that the thing is to increase security, that they seem to send people if you are waiting there so long, they look at you and they start to ask you questions. I think people started becoming more embarrassed, they start to ask them to go out, because I have been challenged sometimes like that.
B: The police …
A: Yes by the police, because I have been waiting for a long time there, but I don't think this is kind of discouraging because they are trying to do their job, because, I don't know if it's good…
Author: It doesn't happen to me.
A: Yes, it doesn't happen to you, because I don't know why, I don't say why this or that, as B said he doesn't know why they are [...], maybe because of that embarrassment
Author: Sorry, has it happened to you?
A: Yes, it has happened to me; they will come to you…
B: They remove the Finns…who are drunk…
A: They remove even Finns who are drunk…so…
Author: Were you drunk?
A: …but I am not drunk [laughing][286]

AD, a Somali informant, tells about the prejudice of policing.

Author: Do you think that Somalis know their rights?
AD: Yes, this is a question. Many people don't know their rights. Some people told me that the police came and interrupted their discussion while they were inside here. So first they started asking, "What is wrong with us?" "Please give us time to finish our discussion" [laughter] and the police said "no, no you have to go back" and they started to force them out. So these actions may happen because of misunderstandings, but most Somalis, young Somalis who speak fluently Finnish, who do under-

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[285] Extract from discussion No26 (Helsinki, 18.6.2004), with AC a member of the staff of Finnish Railways. AC's working area included the Central Hall.

[286] Extract from discussion No8 (Helsinki, 12.4.2003), with A and B two Nigerian students living in Helsinki.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. The Central Hall. On the left-hand side a group of immigrants standing and discussing amidst a flowing crowd.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1979. Main Hall. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

stand the purpose of this railway station, which is transportation …so if someone from the police or the authority of the station comes, they start to do what they are told, maybe before 1996 there would have been problems but not anymore because people escape easily.

Author: Do you think Somalis have less rights to be talking friendly to each other in a group standing in the station? Less than Finns of Greeks, or…?

AD: They have equal rights but the suspicion of the police is always negative towards Somalis or Africans in general. Because they think ok these people are doing some business [laughter] although they just stand and discuss.[287]

The station is admittedly a difficult zone kept strictly under control, or it seems like it. Undoubtedly, certain behaviours should be negotiated as restricting the freedom of others; however, much too often it is the identities, and above all the stereotypes, that are the focus of attention and motivate persecutions. Mind you, the sight of such persecutions in a public space doesn't increase the safety people feel.[288] Life in the Central Hall fascinates me with its hushed diversity.

This space of the city, after some time of observation, causes me a certain anxiety, a feeling of anticipation that at any moment something can happen. When I sit on the large, horseshoe shaped bench[289] of the Central Hall, pretending to rest, my eyes run from one face to the next, from one strange outfit to another, from one loud youngster to the next loud black man happy to see his friends, and I anticipate that indeed there is always the possibility for things to happen. The security guards, in black uniforms, patrol the station and the Central Hall. Most of them are men, most of them tall, muscular, often youngsters with extremely serious faces – the look of authority – rarely allowing themselves to socialize with the people. I am tempted to follow them with my eyes every time I notice their presence in the vicinity, for there the anticipation is really vibrant: where are they heading to, who are they going to talk to and what has that person done? Will there be aggressive gestures, a struggle, offensive shouts, complaining helpless words? Silence. After each incident (I have witnessed a few) there is a moment of relative silence, at least from those of us who actually witness an incident. Am I momentarily trying to evaluate the situation, am I intimidated, or a bit scared?

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287 Extract from discussion No27 (Helsinki, 27.6.2004), with AD a Somali living in Helsinki.

288 "While the safety belt thus inherently perpetuates the fear of accident, which makes it impossible to get used to it, the air bag is popular safety device. The reason is its invisibility." (Schivelbusch 1980, p. 154)
This is a good point relating to the policing devices employed to monitor public spaces, as well as the police guards themselves. Their presence is still contradictory regarding the increase of public safety. Guards constitute an anxiety factor and at the same time they are reassuring,

providing the probability of salvation from the ills of being in public among strangers; however, their presence as well as the monitoring devices can't guarantee our physical safety or psychological immunity. Those of us who have at times needed the help of security guards in busy public spaces, but didn't get it, know what I mean.

289 The wooden bench with its dividing brass bars (lower than armrests), surrounds the escalators that connect the ground floor of the station to the underground levels with shops and further below to the metro station.

Guarding the Station

" […] the traditional way of thinking about threats to rules focuses on a claimant and potential offender, and although this certainly has its value, especially when we examine closely all the means available for introducing remedies and corrections, still the role of the situation is usually thereby neglected." (Goffman 1972, p.59)

Helsinki Railway Station, 1926. Policemen at the main hall. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Entering the station, one enters a particular territory of transgression (public service building, semi-public regulations, and private company).[290] There is a certain code of contact and behaviour in the station, and private security guards and surveillance technology presumably prevent dissent. Such a code is nowhere to be literally seen, although it is omnipresent for the guards and the few offenders who suffer the consequences of breaking that code. The management of the station was very helpful to provide me with a copy of the Guarding Instructions. Here I will refer to a few points about the people guards supposed to consider *disturbing*, and to therefore kindly remove from the station. Such people shouldn't be allowed to enter the premises, but if they do, the guards should take them out. Only people with an errand should be allowed to stay in the station, while drifters shouldn't be allowed.[291] Drunkards and disturbing people should be removed, while all along the priority of the guards is the safety of all stakeholders. Discrimination by the guards is discouraged;

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[290] The public/private status of the station is negotiable: I consider it semi-public due to the regulations that are supposed to apply to all public spaces (see Public Order Act). On the other hand these regulations are put in practice by private guards, practicing their duties in a highly commercialized space. I say negotiable and not contradictive contemplating on the following:

"The library arcade is transgressive, liberally mixing traditionally separate public and private spaces with civic and commercial functions." (Lees 1998, p.243)
Lees is referring to a public library in Vancouver; however, I see similarities with the station.

[291] In an article about the revitalisation of public spaces in the city of London, Edwin Heathcote writes:

however, it is quite obvious that stereotypes and appearances, about themselves and their *customers*, are basic tools for exercising their duties. Guards are advised to make sure that the station remains a safe and pleasant place for people to conduct their business. Apart from the obviously intoxicated (whom I believe should be treated as patients more than offenders), I couldn't find specific suggestions in the the Guarding Instructions as to who are the disturbing people the guards should look out for and remove from the station. I am led to believe, therefore, that discriminatory prejudice is ultimately the criterion for conducting safeguarding in a busy place such as the station, which by its nature is considered a fertile ground for crime.[292] The station is managed as a defensive space where crime and dissent can occur at any moment, and preventive action requires guards alert to anyone attracting their, or the camera surveillance officer's, attention. Design does contribute to the shaping of such a defensive space, by aligning it to a managing agenda that seeks to expel the social aspect of the station, as well as its peculiarly public character. The station should be the safest place in the city; still it isn't a great paradox that the majority of the urbanites of Helsinki consider the station to be dangerous ground.

The 'Other' in the Station

> "[…] a taking to, and of, the street is not an inherently democratic or emancipatory act. In the wrong circumstances in can destroy the 'publicness' of public space just as surely as excessive police control and surveillance." (Lees 1998, p. 238)

> "Ironically, advocates of more police on the beat and their critics both see urban public space as under siege, even if, in the contemporary city of antagonisms, they cannot agree whether the threat comes principally from crime, disorder, and moral decline or from unemployment and uneven development." (Lees 1998, p.236)

Of 200,000 people passing daily through the main hall of Helsinki central train station half are commuters; this means that 100,000 people are using the hall for a multitude of other purposes (Saarinen 1996, p.5). The station was established early on as the setting for impor-

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"A hundred revitalised public spaces may be very nice but, more importantly, pedestrians need to be able to reclaim the streets. Why do we gesture to thank motorists who stop at zebra crossings? Because of an in-bred pedestrian inferiority complex. That way lies exurbia. What we need, like the dogs in Tati's Mon Oncle, is a sense of ownership of the whole street-or at least equality with cars. The future for London urbanism may be as simple as legitimised jay-walking." (Heathcote 2005, p.37)
The issues which Heathcote raises, concerning inferior-

ity complexes, reclaiming ownership or equality in public spaces, and jaywalking, are paramount for my work. Heathcote could very well include the station in his discussion, as an example of a space taken over by commercialisation instead of cars, where jaywalkers are persecuted and urbanites are frustrated as to what their rights are.

292 You can read more on the ambivalence of the definition of disturbing people in the next section.

Helsinki Railway Station, 1983. Control room. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

tant events in people's lives. Many migrants from the Finnish countryside, full of dreams and hopes, arrived here to start a new life in the capital. It was and still is a meeting place, and attracts the whole spectrum of life (Högström 1996, p.7). There is a regulatory ambivalence that makes the station's public spaces more inclusive but also and circumstantially more exclusive, too.

The site of the station, as a careful product of political and planning decisions, didn't engender characteristics of a *slum* as such.[293] Then what are the elements that make this *bourgeois* space feel dangerous, or threatening? Being a busy central city space where, because of its public nature strangers encounter one another, of course engenders *possibilities*. Wilson (1991, p.167) points out that the ambivalence of cities is seductive and for that reason dangerous; therefore, anticipating possibilities is threatening as well as

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[293] AR a Finnish author said that the station is a bourgeois space, which as always young people use to meet (s/he remembered that this was the case in the 50s and 60s). Then too, however, hanging around in the station was not a respectable thing to do. S/he said that security guards in the 50s were more visible while nowadays surveillance technologies have made policing more discrete. S/he thought of the fears about the station as being exaggerated since criminality was never such a big problem. S/he characteristically said that the danger in the space is more in the imagination of those who don't use the station so often. Discussion No43 (Helsinki, 20.2.2006).

Helsinki Railway Station, 1937. Waiting next to the train for the city of Turku. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

Helsinki Railway Station, 70s. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää.

liberating. Wilson also makes the point that the term *bourgeois* is used as a mask for socio-spatial injustice.

> "The colonial imperative was close to the surface even in the empirical heartlands: the city was essentially for the white, male bourgeoisie; all others were there on sufferance. The purpose of the plan was to create a city of order and surveillance rather than one of pleasure and opportunity." (Wilson 1991, p.156)

Could order and surveillance, omnipresent at the station, be contributing to the ambiguity of the space? It is possible. The common sense, as well as the common rhetoric, wants some of the people who frequent the station to be the main source of anxiety to the rest of us. More and more, then, it seems that the people who differ from the white, male-dominated bourgeoisie are still considered something else, in this us and *them* logic. Who are these 'Other' people?

During the time I have lived in Helsinki, kind friends and colleagues have tried to keep me informed of media articles referring to the station. Some articles did appear in the national press and two extensive ones foregrounded the issue of youth present at the station. The aim was to demystify the issue, which in the urban conscience has been identified with the threat of violence, aggressive behaviours and disorder. The additional fact that this youth is racially mixed proliferates feelings of unease.

On Sunday the 10th of October, 2004, in the *Helsingin Sanomat* there was an article about a project that the authorities put together to approach and assist youngsters, and to mediate between young gangs loitering around the station. The volunteers working for this project cooperated with social workers and the police precinct, offering practical assistance to youngsters (a place to live, to work, or a place to play and have fun, etc.) while at the same time providing a space for negotiation between young offenders and the authorities. Some of the volunteers working for the project were of Somali origin. The project, which involved two schools for the training of the project volunteers, has been in demand for other areas in Helsinki, too.[294] Such initiatives are worth every effort. However, this is only one small part of the whole picture the media has moulded about the station.

In my interview with AD, a Somali man living in Helsinki, we read about the perception of the station as an ambiguous area partly due to a wide-spread intercultural miscommunication.

> Author: What are the reasons that make you uncomfortable in those spaces?
> AD: Particular reasons, maybe, for example… the media has shown pictures of what is happening at the train station, so including me for example, we have the image that

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[294] Lehtonen L. (2004). *Fenixissa etsitään maahanmuuttajanuorille uusia elämisen mahdollisuuksia.* [At Fenix they are looking for new ways of living for immigrant youth]. Helsingin Sanomat. 10th November, pp. C10 (in Finnish).

this place, the people who stay here, it's more people who are drop-outs, drunkards, so not good people. So to be late and with the background, it gives me a little bit difficulty… so the media and the TV has shown different pictures about the railway station…two months ago they have shown 2-3 young foreigners who were robbing here downstairs in channel 4 and that makes people afraid, including me. Another thing is that the media has a big contribution in making people be afraid of the whole railway station, not only me, but the majority of Finnish people, this is a risky place shown by the media.

Author: Has the presence of Somalis in the station anything to do with the perception of the railway station as a dangerous place?

AD: To tell the truth, of course there are different people among Somalis with different difficulties and situations, so we cannot judge all the Somalis when they stay here or stay downstairs that they are doing difficulties, no or that they are criminals. That is not the question. The question is that some people come here to get information, like in our country, and it is also the way it is built, because it is an inside space, where you can come in, it's warm. So many people come here to spend their time, and the way many officials of the train station react to this was aggression, recruiting police to guard the place. That was wrong (a small laughter), first we have to find what is the situation, why are they staying here, are there any other solutions, like to expand space, designed for youngsters to stay there and to play. This is the right solution not to recruit police, security…

 Of course, people who are here have different tasks to sit here, some looking information, maybe their buses are late. They don't have money to go the restaurant because it's expensive, so they stay here, stand there. So we have to think about to have a good solution, but not to have extra police… this is wrong.[295]

Above, my interlocutor talks about certain areas in the station that are a cause for anxiety, especially later in the evenings or at night time. One is the underground shopping area, beneath the station, and the other is just outside the station. My interlocutor saw a big part of responsibility to belong to the media representations of the station, as well as to the decisions by the station's authorities to intensify policing.

From the same interview:

AD: Because this [the station] is a place where people can travel and happen many things, so many times I have seen many police, not guards, and that makes people a bit afraid. […]

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295 Extract from discussion No27 (Helsinki, 27.6.2004).

Author: How do Somali women feel in the station?

AD: As I mentioned, I have fears when I am travelling in the night,

Author: Are you afraid of drunken Finns?

AD: Yes, yes there have been accidents in the metro, Somali women have been attacked, Somali man was attacked while in the metro alone and there were 4-5 racists Finns attacked him and his eye was damaged. I don't know, there are memories. And what do you think; women always are afraid of risks. They think that this is a place to travel, not to socialize. Most when they come here they like to associate with other women, not alone because of the risk, yes.

Author: The security here is supposed to protect all the people, no?

AD: No, no. Because we are illiterate people, our information goes through the telephones, and through sayings. We say, and the saying goes, so many women know that the police here has bad image about the Somalis, so they knew from first they don't get service only offense. But nowadays young girls socialise here late…we can't say that they are bad. They just want some place together to have fun [laughter]. So my suggestion is again that in the railway station or near, inside, there must be some club, night club for gatherings for kids to gather and have fun.[296]

On Sunday the 5th of December 2004, once again the Finnish national newspaper Helsingin Sanomat published a long and richly illustrated article whose title, in colloquial Finnish, would translate as something like: "A hell of a lot of refugees." It concerned the Helsinki Railway Station and the youngsters who frequent here. "We hang around here always when we can" said one. The article sketches an impression of a truly multicultural social space where multiethnic and multilingual youngsters chose to be, unlike the Finns with their briefcases who run through the area as fast as they can. We read about the 32 nationalities encountered in the station; we also read the stories of some 12 to 15 youngsters interviewed. The aim of the article was to de-demonize the station area and the youth present there. The personal trajectories of these youngsters, to my understanding, claimed for them individual identities.[297] They are not the unruly, foreign 'Other' whose appearance, slang, manners, and group gatherings threaten the status quo of the peaceful Finnish capital in need, instead, of wealthy tax payers. They are, each and every one of them, a person with a history, frustrations and aspirations, seeking for security and strength. The station is their ground, too, simple as that.[298]

296 *ibid.*

297 Discussion No9 (18.9.2003), with L, a Finn working for the Helsinki City Cultural Office. L said that people have names, too, not only nationality and religion.

298 For a self awakening experience regarding the youth presence I refer you to the part on *Olohuone.*

For these youngsters the station is a relatively safe space, and free of charge.[299] They may look *ethnic* but they are Finnish citizens; many of them are born in Finland. These 'foreigners' are in fact *New Finns*. Riika Venäläinen, the author of the article, is surfacing two issues that are worth mentioning. Youngsters, especially the newcomers, often don't know what is legal or punishable in their new city. While for the young people, *ethnic* or not, it seems a challenge to test the limits of the authorities. It seems to me that for the foreign young girls and boys, living in an environment of intercultural miscommunication, a schism is taking shape between their home regimes and the outside. Many parents in diaspora are afraid of the Finlandization of their children, who in the meanwhile have to find their place in a society that rejects them, but of which they are part.[300] As the article mentions, a big problem young people with immigrant backgrounds have to face, is the feeling of alienation, of not belonging.[301]

AC, a staff member of the station, reveals the cultural misunderstandings we have to tackle in our everyday lives:

> Author: Do you think there are differences in behaviour between natives and foreigners?
> AC: ….emm… I have to say that for me if there are some coloured people, I don't recognize maybe where they are from, but I recognize these, Somali?… what is it?
> Author: Somalis
> AC: Yes Ok. And I believe this is also a cultural thing, but they tend not to say the thank you … they are … that doesn't offend me as much as a Finnish person coming and then not saying thank you […]
> Author: Have you talked about this with your colleagues?
> AC: Well, actually, a lot of my colleagues, well not a lot but, let's say a few of my colleagues are very offended by that, they have opinions about that.[302]

The title of another article is telling: *Night time is dangerous at the Train Station*.[303] The facts presented in the article were the results of a survey contacted by e-mail. That already limits the group of respondents considerably, and in a way I am inclined to imagine that must have excluded marginalised people, who in most cases are the cause of anxiety in the city. In any case the article is revealing. A staggering 60% of respondents found the immediate Helsinki centre and the metro particularly dangerous at night time. The group

[299] In the same article: crime statistics show that 58% of all crimes in Helsinki are committed within a 100 metres radius of the station. Police gets the offenders who are mostly foreigners because they are visible.

[300] Hassouin (1996) is very relevant concerning inter-generational dialogue within immigrant families.

[301] Venäläinen, R. (2004). *Ihan sairaasti pakolaisia*. [Hell of a lot of refugees]. Helsingin Sanomat 5.12.2004, pp. D1-D3 (in Finnish).

[302] Extract from discussion No26 (Heslinki, 18.6.2004), with AC a member of the staff of Finnish Railways.

[303] Palttala, P. (2006). *Öinen asema pelottaa*. [Night time is dangerous at the station]. Vartti. 14.09.2006, No61, pp. 4 (in Finnish).

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. Main Hall.

that is mostly affected by fears of being in public are young people, as they are the ones who are likely to witness unpleasant situations during their weekend escapades. Not surprisingly, the second age group with unpleasant experiences are between 35 and 44 years old. They are the big spenders in weekend entertainment and active in legitimate albeit heavy, drinking. The author closes the article in a rather typical manner, concerning the media contribution to urban fears: it is very reasonable to feel fear in the dark, or think twice before one starts yelling at someone in line at the hot-dog stand. Details are not mentioned as to what might be the significations of fears for women and men, or for white and black people, for intoxicated or not.

While the article concludes with the idea that one has every reason to be afraid of the Helsinki city centre, the head of security and emergency situations for Helsinki, interviewed in the article, seems to offer a quite different perspective: Helsinki is safer than it used to be, and this has been a gradual process in the last twenty years.[304] He goes on to speculate that a reason for this high anxiety people experience being in the centre of Helsinki might be the feeling that someone else is taking care of their safety. It is certain professionals' work to be responsible for public safety, therefore the public should rest assures and hand control of their safety to the professionals. Of course there are actual sources for anxiety, not least the presence of crowds, the encounter of strange or intoxicated people, or being in a dark place.

To my understanding, the safety expert has a point, something that I have encountered time and again in literature and research:[305] the design and management of urban public space as defensive space, armoured with preventive policing and surveillance technologies – all potent machinations of a police state – is ambiguous as to its purpose and results. Grass-roots mobilisation and negotiating our fears in the city would probably be immensely more constructive than authorities' induced safeguarding. As I have maintained before, public space is relational and, as such, I have to agree with Lees (1998, p.251), we make of it what we will.

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[304] One should ask: what does it mean for Helsinki to be *safer*? How the authorities frame safety and how people actually experience safety in the city?

[305] See the work of Hille Koskela.

Helsinki, 2003. Hakaniemi Square. A woman dressed in her traditional roma clothes.

Helsinki, 2002. Toilets at a café-restaurant in Myyrmäki.

4.6 DIVERSITY

In this chapter I would like to discuss certain aspects of the concept of diversity that are relevant for this work. I chose this way to round up the analysis of Omonia Square and the Helsinki Railway Station. Sandercock (2003) addresses the problem of intercultural communication in countries which traditionally didn't have self-images as destinations for immigrants. Such countries – I include Greece and Finland – share the notion of nation building upon the assumption of a white nation, white culture and therefore white dominance. The other side of the coin is that most countries of the West that share this kind of identification understand non-white people, cultures and identities as inferior. Sandercock, interestingly, pronounces the "post" in post-colonialism as untimely; I have to agree.

> "The transition from western imperialisms to already racialized liberal democracies in which the persistence of institutionalized racism, not to mention individual prejudice, has enormously complicated the politics of immigration and the social integration of immigrants, let alone the treatment of indigenous populations. The racism implicit in the eighteenth-century Euro-American Enlightenment project of 'civilizing' the supposedly uncivilized parts of the globe endures, and in that sense we have not arrived at an age of postcolonialism." (Sandercock 2003, p.23)

There is a good chance that even in societies as advanced and equalitarian as the Finnish, narratives of white supremacy may very well be accommodated. Sandercock suggests that this is partly because, when faced with ever complicating diversity, we look for reassurance in an alleged homogeneity; Finnishness or Hellenismos, Danishness, and so on.

These issues are multilayered. How does the urban public space of the cities reflect our fears of the 'Other'? There is not one answer to that. A web of interrelated decisions – from the level of the vernacular to high centres of power, from educating infants, to design and planning, all these micro and macro decisions – have a political bearing as to whose fears are articulated, publicised, debated, and accommodated in the city. Sandercock (2003, p.108, 115) talks of an "economy of city fears." Parallel to that, I believe that there is also a fear of low growth that feeds our conceptions of what a city for everyone can be. When we think of revamping city centres, we consider the rich tax payers we want to attract and the tourists, not the marginalised urbanites.[306]

I can safely claim that our cities are indeed becoming increasingly diverse in every respect, but especially regarding social coherence. Different kinds of people mean different

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[306] "While gentrification celebrates diverse city streets, it also pacifies and represses them, in order to make them feel 'safe' for a middle class public." (Lees 1998, p.238)

sets of values; whose values, fears, and rights for representation and political participation are more valuable? And if we all have truly equal rights to the city, as living space, space of material resources and symbolic space, then how do we manage the space of such a city? Sandercock provides examples and a discussion that openly targets the planning professionals. I, in my turn, feel the wider value of her contribution. I want to urge design and management that involve taking advantage of the different ways to knowledge in the formation of urban public space.

Immigration

"I suggest that although 'national space' is an imaginary, it is an imaginary that is actually, literally, embodied in the local spaces of one's streets, neighbourhood and city, where it is either reinforced or undermined. […] When the locality begins to change, one's imaginary of national space is no longer congruent with one's actual experience of local space. And this produces insecurity (when security is equated with the absence of a threatening otherness). […] Fears are generated. Loss is experienced. 'The Other', the stranger, is thought to be taking over, or as having already taken over. Resentment builds. […] Unlike the nation with its (imagined) homogeneity and boundedness, diaspora suggests heterogeneity and porousness. If nations define home, then diasporas interrupt the closure of nation." (Sandercock 2003, p.112-113)[307]

Overcoming our fears is not the issue here. How we deal with our fears is a more realistic question, as well as how we express, negotiate and discuss about them. Sandercock suggests that fears can acquire common internalisation in a wider public in situations where change is evident. An event par excellence of such social change in a city or region is *immigration*.

When as Finns, or Greeks, we fear that 'foreigners' are taking over our countries, we fear loosing our way of life, our living space. When Greeks seem to believe that immigrants are snatching away *their* jobs, and when Finns complain that many immigrants, and too many refugees, are a burden for their welfare state budgets,[308] basically they are afraid of change occurring around us, and within us. I do not rely on psychoanalysis here, but on reading as widely as possible about the strangers in our cities, but above all being a stranger myself most of my life.

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307 Sandercock also refers to Bourdieu's *habitus*; according to her interpretation, the *known* spatial ordering of the city affirms our sense of belonging in a society, then that society, field, city space can be our *'home.'*

308 This is the sense that one gets about public opinion from the media parlance as well as from scholarly work.

Being a foreigner in Helsinki affects me more than being a foreigner in the 90s in the Dutch South Brabunt. I am convinced that this is because I am more conscious of urban environments, and urbanites that I was then, I am also older and more experienced; however Europe, too, changes. In Finland I put myself in the position of a 'wannabe' cosmopolitan in a city that, though not impressive in size, has a rich history of multiculturalism and external influences.[309] While different cultures always seem to have been cohabitating Finland, a dominant attitude among urban scholars is that the Finnish is a homogeneous society. Multiculturalism has been something that Helsinki has to endorse.

> "For if an individual is to join someone in some kind of social bond, surely he must do so by giving up some of the boundaries and barriers that ordinarily separate them." (Goffman 1972, p.58)

The City of Helsinki (or rather its think tanks) has difficulties grasping its multicultural past in order to work further on it, because it still has to deal with the shock of Finland turning from a traditionally emigrating country into a receiving destination for immigrants. The fact of the transition itself is a reason for national pride, as it proves economic advancement to very high levels. Nevertheless, Helsinki, as many other peripheral European metropolises, has difficulties to manage positively the historical and cultural consequences of this transition. The black Somali refugees that came to Finland in the early 90s signify the first entrance of foreigners en mass to a predominantly white country. I decided to enquire into Somalis in Helsinki quite early in my research. Meanwhile, given the alleged "war on terror," I agree with the view that while certain Islamists propagate even the violent end of the supremacy of the West, at the same time fundamentalists in the West have declared war on the miasma of Islam. Such fundamentalisms drive intercultural communication to an impasse, and affect the lives of all of us and surely urban space, in ways that we can't ignore. For many Europeans, Muslims represent nowadays a stigmatized and criminalized identity, and as much as we try to pretend impartiality, urban scholarship demonstrates otherwise.[310]

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309 Among others, long Swedish and Russian occupations. Finnish history is rich in struggles and accomplishments: a slow and persistent way to independence, a painful state and national identity formation, a civil war, a transition from rural to industrial economy, financial difficulties; World War II, which found Finland in the "losing" camp; the Cold War; emigration; the fall of the Communist regime in the neighbouring USSR; the miracle of what Castells and Himanen (2002) have named the Finnish Information Society; Immigration; the Globalisation of Helsinki. For more see Klinge & Kolbe (1999); Bell & Hietala (2002); Castells & Himanen (2002).

310 "Muslim immigrants are widely perceived as threatening what is liberal in liberal democracies, specifically because of their patriarchal practices and their opposition to homosexuality. This is a particular concern in countries with a strong social liberal tradition in recent decades such as the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands." (Sandercock 2003, p.122)

Enclaving

> "The history of planning could be rewritten as the attempt to manage fear in the city: generically, fear of disorder and fear of dis/ease, but specifically fear of those bodies thought to produce that disorder or dis/ease-at different historical moments and places these have included women, the working-class, immigrants, gays, youth, and so on. At least four generic kinds of 'solutions' have been promoted for the past hundred years: one is policing, […] a second is spatial containment and segregation, […] by providing parks and playgrounds, settlement houses, community centres, and other 'civilizing' urban facilities. A fourth, more recent, approach is assimilation through social policies such as national language requirements and civics classes, to make 'the Other' into 'one of us.'" (Sandercock 2003, p.108-9)

All the 'solutions' Sandercock mentions are institutionalised and normalised to such a degree that when an alien challenges them, it often seems heretical. In Helsinki there is CAISA – the main multicultural centre of the city – the symbolic 'home' for all of us whom the mainstream will not accept un-compartmentalised, without going through the channels of Finnish multicultural socialisation. To my understanding, such centres serve indeed a very important purpose for helping outsiders to partake in the receiving society; however, intercultural communication is much more than teaching the skills to assimilate in or take advantage of the new society, or to organise food evnts, music festivals and art exhibitions for those who have a taste for ethnic exoticism.

> "Cities that become increasingly enclaved are not environments that generate conditions conductive to an open and tolerant way of life. […] This enclaving of the city builds on particular discourses of fear that seek to cleanse and purify the city as amoral order, as well as to make the city safe for consumption, and so to protect the economic order. Rather than being swept under the carpet as undiscussable, or tackled as an issue of increasing urban fortification or outright exclusion, these fears need to be communicated and negotiated if we are to keep alive the idea of the city as a vital public sphere." (Sandercock 2003, p.125)

My contact at the Strategic Planning Division of the Helsinki Planning Office charac-terised Helsinki as maybe the best planned city in Europe, while the impact of social issues like immigration on physical city planning is immaterial in Helsinki.[311] Still Helsinki may be in a better situation than the six European countries in a study Sandercock refers to.[312]

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[311] Discussion No22 (Helsinki, 7.4.2004), with Y member of the staff of the Helsinki City Planning Office.

[312] Khakee, A., P.Somma and H. Thomas, eds. (1999) *Urban Renewal, Ethnicity and Social Exclusion in Europe.* Aldrshot: Ashgate.

"The general pattern that emerges from these six national studies shows a strong concentration of immigrant minorities in the worst housing, in specific districts of large urban areas, either in inner-city high density housing or in peripheral districts. In all six counties (Sweden, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, France and Britain), discussions of immigrants are framed by the conception of the 'immigrant as problem.'" (Sandercock 2003, p.134)

Three years since I first started discussing about 'Little Mogadishu,' as an enclave of Somali people in East Helsinki, in November 2006 a Finnish drama series began called *Mogadishu Avenue*.[313] On the one hand it is relieving that a TV drama may bring a hidden urban reality into the foreground of the everyday; on the other hand it is saddening that it is a TV drama that must advance the discussion on a serious social issue, namely the Somali presence in the city. The everyday experience of A and B, two Nigerian students in Helsinki, is revealing this regard.

Author: What do you know about little Mogadishu.
A: You mean about the Mogadishu issue, I never knew about it, I have heard when I moved here but about Vuosaari, this area there are a lot of foreigners living there, a lot of my friends are talking about this, but I have never heard of this area, only when I came here and people told me O you live in Little Mogadishu, and I find difficult to see the foreigners around here, because we hardly see the foreigners in the street, but maybe you see them more than if you live in another area. Because I moved here from Pasila and I saw foreigners there, I lived in a student apartment which contains many students and foreign students. But this area of the Mogadishu issue, is more with black people, I think I see more coloured people here, as you have said and is more called Little Mogadishu.
B: One of my friend's family, wife, they moved out of here because of… they moved to Vuosaari because most of their friends they were saying they living where the Somali, in Somaliland, so they had to move out to Pikku Huopalahti.
A: I want also to make a reference there, because I don't know if it's true, but I think that they used to give houses to people like, if they know you are black or a Finn is married to a black and they want to give them allocation of a house, the tradition of getting an apartment in a house with a lot of black is very high, here in Finland.

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313 The series was due to air in November 2006. There was a strong promotional campaign and media attention. An article in the newspaper Helsingin Uutiset, revealed that "Mogadishu Avenue" was in fact shot in a different location than the original area in the East of Helsinki where the series supposedly takes place. Apparently, the article informed, the area was not run down enough. The producers chose instead an area in Espoo, a municipality West of Helsinki (Markette Karjalainen, *Mogadishu Avenue kuvattiin Espoossa*. [Mogadishu Avenue shot in Espoo]. Helsingin Uutiset. 27th October, p.12, (in Finnish).

I don't know if it's true but that's my experience. If you want to see a lot of black married to Finns living in houses with other blacks… I don't know the system of allocation of houses, is it a coincidence?[314]

Police Space

"Portraying certain groups in the city as people to be feared, Blacks, gays, youths, the homeless, immigrant youths, Aboriginals, Jews, and so on, also has intended policy consequences, from police sweeps, to increasing the hardware of surveillance, to defensive architectural and design practices. What is less explored, and therefore less clear, is that portraying certain groups as fear-inducing surely serves to some extent to produce the very behaviours that are dreaded, while also increasing the likelihood that such groups will be victimized (through hate crimes and/or official brutality) with relative impunity." (Sandercock 2003, p.123-4)

If urban space reflects the society that inhabits it, then it wouldn't be unjust to say that a society fearful of the 'Other' will resort to defensive and punitive space design in order to comfort its fears. Sandercock (2003), like Karidis (1996), points out that such measures are vengeful and perpetuate social issues by casting them as police matters. The vicious circle

Athens, 2006. Members of the special police force, early morning in Omonia Square.

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314 Extract from discussion No8 (Helsinki, 12.4.2003), with
A and B Nigerian students living in Helsinki.

of criminalising and victimising, when supported by urban policies and enacted upon urban public space, creates a police space, with doubtful boundaries and even more doubtful rights for urbanites. As Koskela (1997, 1999, 2000) shows with her work, increasing the hardware of defensive architecture doesn't necessarily make victimised people (women in particular) feel or be safer.

Authorities as representatives of law and order, and designers as experts, tend to regulate space; a sort of resource management. Doing so, as Sandercock explains, urban space is doomed to suffer 'Alzheimers,' and in such spaces where memory and history and spirit are not accommodated and inspired, the only alternative is the Lefebvrean abstract space of lines, use protocols, quantities. Can it really be so bad? I have elsewhere, expressed my disbelief in Augéan non-places, and I do believe that places don't have memory, people do. This 'memory loss' refers to discontinuity; to the selective and top-down decision of what is to be part of a common public life in urban public space. Most institutional forces, part of a status quo, resist change in fear of losing power. It is not a surprise then that we talk more and more about the mobilisation of civil society, and about the difference the individual can make in stirring up processes of social debate. Sandercock advocates that for social change to take place for cities wherein strangers can live together without violating each other too much,[315] we must have the support of political parties.

> "Society becomes increasingly complex with the transition from the rural to the industrial and from the industrial to the urban. This multifaceted complexification affects space as well as time, for the complexification of space and the objects that occupy space cannot occur without a complexification of time and the activities that occur over time. This space is occupied by interrelated networks, relationships that are defined by interference. Its homogeneity corresponds to intentions, unified strategies, and systematized logics, on the one hand, and reductive, and consequently simplifying, representations, on the other. At the same time, differences become more pronounced in populating this space, which tends, like any abstract space, toward homogeneity (quantitative, geometric, and logical space). This, in turn, results in conflict and a strange sense of unease. For this space tends toward a unique code, an absolute system, that of exchange and exchange value, of the logical thing and the logic of things. At the same time, it is filled with subsystems, partial codes, messages, and signifiers that do not become part of the unitary procedure that the space stipulates, prescribes, and inscribes in various ways." (Lefebvre, 2003[1970], p.167)

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[315] Sandercock refers here to Donald, J. (1999). *Imagining the Modern City*. London: The Athlone Press.

Lefebvre, better than Sandercock, addresses the urban problematic on diversity. However, he sees in the state the enemy of peoples' happiness.

> "The radical critique of urban illusion opens the way to urban practice and the theory associated with this practice, which will advance together during the process of overall development (if this development assumes greater importance than growth, together with its ideologies and strategies). […] Such a critique can only be radical by rejecting the state, the role of the state, the strategy of the state, and the politics of space." (Lefebvre (2003)[1970], p.163)

Sandercock turns the argument around; with the help of Holston's (1998) insurgent practices, she maintains that people do resist top-down decisions. And where earlier she saw enclaving as a bad omen for a multicultural city, now I, in my turn with the help of Fraser's (1992) *subaltern counterpublics*, have to underline the importance of enclaves in the push for social change from a grass-roots level. The point I want to make here is not to show the contrast between Lefebvre and Sandercock; on the contrary I want to show their commonality. What Sandercock believes will bring change in urban social life, is a partnership between civil society and politics. In that, she seems to follow of Lefebvre's critique on urban authorities, be it the state or planners.

I tend partly to agree with Sandercock's suggestion, because I have come to believe in the appropriative and insurgent power of people, in an individual and collective fashion. The struggle to be heard is an ongoing one; some might say that words cannot suffice for change, it might be so. Some words though must be said in order for change to have a chance.

Helsinki, 2002. Reclaim the Streets event.

Inclusive City

> "Rational planners have been obsessed with controlling how and when and which people use public as well as private space. Meanwhile, ordinary people continue to find creative ways of approaching spaces and creating places, in spite of planning, to fulfil their desires as well as their needs, to tend the spirit as well as take care of the rent. […] That is the process of identifying what we might call 'sacred places' in the urban landscape." (Sandercock 2003, p.226)

I don't have the slightest doubt that even in totalitarian regimes, people never cease to create such places; *appropriation* is not a new discovery of architects and designers who now have to start approaching it constructively.[316] However, as urban experts we do have to examine ourselves and our attitudes towards cities that decreasingly consist of people like us, or people who understand us. And in order for the known *us* and *them* dichotomy not to arise, we have to actually practice what Sandercock calls the "multicultural city." My opposition to her revolves around her strictly cultural perspective. I have my stake in that perspective. Often I argue that the 'public face' of Somalis in Helsinki is distorted and oppressed;[317] victim maybe to an assimilationist perception of immigrant politics, Sandercock might say. However, an inclusive city builds upon a fundamental redistribution of material resources. For making "ethnic," "racial," "religious," to name but a few, groups not only equal participants in a society, but proud and indispensable, too, we have to provide opportunities for them to meet their needs *and* desires, in a reciprocal dialogue of decision making. The authorities need not dictate every single step we take in our private and public lives; we can use our common sense and a relative social awareness stemming from shared responsibility not from social control with the emphasis on control. In diverse societies where there isn't one and only one system of meanings and where social norms are nuanced and multifaceted, even if legalised, social control loses control.

Harold Garfinkel (1967, p.124) writes: "I have stressed several times that for the *bona fide* member 'normal' means 'in accordance with the mores.'"[318] As soon as we recognise that in a diverse and inclusive society "mores" variously serve not only the dominant but also other social groups, then it becomes apparent that social control as a means for social order becomes unable to reflect social complexity.

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[316] Appropriation is a contested and negotiating process that indicates both democratic space and its limitations. See for example Lees (1998, p.245-251).

[317] See Galanakis (2003, 2004) and Galanakis & Oikari-nen-Jabai (2006).

[318] Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology.* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

"[…] a 'first line of social control' make[s] up commonly encountered sanctions whereby persons are reminded to act in accordance with expected attitudes, appearances, affiliations, dress, style of life, round of life, and the like that are assigned by the major institutions." (Garfinkel 1967, p.125)

In a diverse urban context, within a "problematic 'community of understandings,'"[319] facilitating dialectic processes among various stake holders may be preferable to imposing the 'majority's rules.' As social control loses in applicability, an urgent need arises for people to re-engage in discursive processes. Public spaces are not the only fora to facilitate such processes; however, it may prove socially sustainable to work for the amelioration and proliferation of such fora. To my understanding, such a project is unavoidable in today's diverse cities, regardless if we all agree on naming our cities homogeneous, multicultural, or "mongrel."[320]

Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005), upon whom I rely for a critical view of multiculturalists like Sandercock, show us that instead of compartmentalised and institutionalised differences, such as 'gender,' 'race,' 'class' and others in the name of official cultural diversity, the future of the cities should rather rely on supporting a genuine socialist equality which would

New York, 2001. Urban beautification project.

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319 See Garfinkel (1967, p.126).

320 I refer to Sandercock, L. (2003a). *Cosmopolis II. Mongrel Cities in the 21sy Century*. London, New York: Continuum.

acknowledge the richness of the produced, not induced, everyday life differences. However, as unlikely as it may seem for such a socialist equality to be endorsed given the governing persistence on "growth" as Lefebvre points out, a practiced equality may very well require the acceptance of social diversity as a positive force for better cities for all urbanites. And it is intriguing that Goonewardena and Kipfer, too, talk about community as well as Sandercock, although from seemingly different angles. The way I understand the commonalities between what a radical, multiculturalist from the left, or a moderate perspective stand for, is that social change and providing better opportunities for all urbanites to meet their aspirations for a better life has to come from a mobilisation of the grass-roots.

The role and nature of various kinds of communities that could be the nuclei for such processes could very well be what Fraser (1992) defines as *subaltern counterpublics*. Even she, a critical opponent of community norms, oscillates regarding the necessity of umbrella counterpublics that would function as a forum for separate counterpublics to voice their concerns and try to make a difference. Her hesitation, I think, stems from inter-counterpublics communication; in other words how do counterpublics negotiate with each other for campaigning and pressuring. Sandercock seems to believe that this crucial issue requires public spaces that encourage and facilitate such communication. In fact, she gives quite a few examples of cities divided by various *-isms*, wherein people build communication bridges with the help of experts-facilitators. Sandercock suggests that design should play a more active role in these processes, partaking in the facilitation of social dialogue. She doesn't tell us how, but all the way she emphasises the importance of studying cultures, the different people around us, listening, participating, being interested in different ways of knowing, and not just to prove our superiority as experts, and, her advice, to build trust on the knowledge we can acquire from storytelling.

Planners, architects and designers are also members of communities; too often we are closer to the centres of power and the dominant white-superiority narrative. Immigrants, for instance, and homeless people, who may or may not be members of acknowledged communities, are too often at the other end of the power (*in*)balance; their aspirations certainly count less and their voices are barely heard.[321]

> "Immigrants have a particularly strong need for community, for practical as well
> as emotional support, and past experience shows that they will almost always form
> their own communities over time, sometimes spatially concentrated (enclaves),
> sometimes spatially dispersed. A truly multicultural society not only encourages and

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[321] According to Nels Anderson (1975), their lonesomeness and laconic communication might be a reason for the forgetfulness with which American history has treated *hobos* and their role as frontier builders of the US. This is why the work of Anderson that gives voice to the American hobo is important; it gives voice and 'public face' to people who were largely muted.

supports community organizations within immigrant groups, but also works to in-
corporate immigrants into wider, cross-cultural activities and organizations."
(Sandercock 2003, p.136)

Indeed, a truly multicultural society would try to accommodate its 'Other,' to preserve so-
cial diversity from extinction.[322] However, as Goonewardena and Kipfer also imply, in an
egalitarian society culturalism need not be the focus, or race, or gender, or sexual prefe-
rence, or religion. Rather, the focus on equal rights for housing, education, health, political
representation, social interaction, would better describe an inclusive city. While Sandercock
(2003) implies the idea of a necessity for equality, her main point is to analyse the devastat-
ing effects of culturally insensitive and discriminatory cities; her main focus is after all on
multicultural cities. Nevertheless, it is an inclusive city and the quest for equality that can
better facilitate diversity. Multiculturalism is crucial as a realisation of, and a policy guideline
for, social sustainability; however, it is not adequate to encompass multifaceted diversities
and 'slippery' injustices.

Migrant Histories

The term multicultural, just like egalitarian or inclusive, points to deficiencies of
cities; the first refers to the dominance of one culture and the oppression of the rest, while
the latter two refer to the dominance of a group (be it the majority) and the submission of
the rest. All the above characterisations suggest a quasi-utopian situation where the process
of social change for the benefit of all city stake-holders is a guaranteed negotiation of self-
evaluation and even self-refutation. I don't see any problem in working for a better future
while targeting an ideal; utopia is a driving force for change. I applaud Sandercock's idea, as
I have in the past advocated a critical self-refutation.[323]

"[…] there can also be a sense of belonging that comes from being associated with
other cultures, gaining in strength and compassion from accommodation among and
interrelations with others, and it is important to recognize and nurture those spaces
of accommodation and intermingling. This version of multiculturalism accepts the
indispensability of group identity to human life (and therefore to politics), precisely

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322 Here I have once more to refer to the work of Mitchell
(2003a) on homeless people in the US and their right to
the city and to life in general.

323 I refer to the 90s, the years of my architecture studies
in Greece. Swept away by deconstruction and Derrida, I dis-
covered that self-refutation is an important step towards

awareness. Then I was too young to grasp the power of
what I and my colleagues were trying to say. Sandercock
reminds us that self-refutation fertilizes doubts, while we
are all asked to produce certainties. This is the reason of
surfacing 'utopia' here, even only briefly.

because it is inseparable from belonging. But this acceptance needs to be complicat-ed by an insistence, a vigorous struggle against the idea that one's own group iden-tity has a claim to intrinsic truth. If we can acknowledge a drive within ourselves, and within all of our particular cultures, to naturalize the identities given to us, we can simultaneously be vigilant about the danger implicit in this drive, which is the almost irresistible desire to impose one's identity, one's way of life, one's very defi-nition of normality and of goodness, on others. Thus we arrive at a lived conception of identity/difference that recognizes itself as historically contingent and inherently relati-onal; and a cultivation of a care for difference through strategies of critical detachment from the identities that constitute us (Connolly, 1991; Tully, 1995)." (Sandercock 2003, p.103-4)

This self-refutation, the denial of self-righteousness, is as utopian as the multicultural-ism that founds itself on the idea that different people appreciate their identity in relation to others' identities. We all seem to practice that relational association constantly in order to distinguish ourselves from others, and not to assimilate ourselves with others. Is this perspective difficult to understand as a positive human value, similar to the value of iden-tity itself? Often when in Greece, discussing the socio-spatial discrimination of Albanian immigrants taking place in Athens' Omonia Square, I use the argument that we Greeks ourselves have a rich recent history of emigration. This history is one we had better revisit to develop a truly humane face for our immigrants, especially those we seem to dislike most. Hassouin (1996) has admirably shown the value of historical continuity from generation to generation in order for the past and all its perspectives to nourish the future. It seems maybe awkward to talk about the value of stories and past histories when dealing with the issues of inclusive cities; the psychological twist Sandercock discusses concerning the therapeutic processes of planning could very well be seen in the light of Hassouin's perspective.

When Snellman (2005) discusses the Finnish economic immigrants in Sweden, she considers something that to my experience is rarely used in immigration politics.[324] Immigration is considered a quality of the developing world, of people in distress, famine and violence. Such narratives are pushed under the carpet when we regard our own emigration histories, which tend to be normalised and beautified. A cousin in Greece told me that when Greeks went abroad they were mostly hard workers and honest people. She could not understand that Albanian immigrants in Greece might be the same; they can only be disruptors of Greeks' well being.

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324 In *The Road Taken*, Snellman (2005) describes the phenomenon of the Finnish transition from an agrar-ian to an urban society since the Second World War, and of Finnish migration from the woods of Lapland to the Swedish cities of Gothenburg and Västerås.

"On listening to the Finns' narratives of their experiences as immigrants, I cannot help wondering what experiences the immigrants in Finland relate. I would not be surprised if they had a similar tendency to talk in low voices in the streets in order to avoid unpleasantness, and if they felt excluded at work." (Snellman 2005, p.128)[325]

The question Snellman raises is important to keep in mind.

Planning for Diversity

Societies that cater to all, and especially to those in weaker positions, facilitate multi-level communication, and the city space that would reflect that principle would have to accommodate different aspirations and not only quantifiable needs.[326]

"One symptom of the narrowness of modernist planners' horizons is the fact that they find it very hard to focus on desires rather than needs. A need is supposedly an objective entity, identified in 'needs surveys' […]. A desire, by contrast, involves the subconscious, a personal engagement, dreams and feelings, an ability to intuit the atmosphere and feeling of a place. How does the city of desire translate into planning? Perhaps by giving more attention to places of encounter, specifically those which are not commercialized-the street, the square-and which are not placed under the gaze of surveillance technologies. Perhaps also by recognizing that some places of encounter must necessarily be appropriated, and not trying to regulate the uses of all public spaces." (Sandercock 2003, p.224-5)

Hajer and Reijndorp (2001), on the other hand, talk about the desires inherent in all aspects of our activities, especially those that strive to shape common grounds. For them, the modus operandi of planners is full of desires. Of course this doesn't mean that our desires meet the desires of the people who eventually live within our realised projects.

"The design and spatial organization of the public space tell us a lot about cultural ambitions. They illustrate cherished wishes and innate desires. The layout and appearance of the public space can also tell a tale of fear, uncertainty and neglect. We can 'read' the street like this. Decisions about the way we deal with the shaping

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[325] According to Snellman, Finnish politicians in Sweden published a book in the early 70s. They gave the following reasoning for publishing the book also in the Finnish language: "Finland will undoubtedly be receiving immigrants and will have to solve many of the problems that have ei-ther already been solved in Sweden or that will have to be solved in the near future." (Snellman 2005, p.128)

[326] As earlier, I use *desires* aware of the rational thinking that locates them in the sphere of the unreal.

of the society. By arranging or rearranging the physical forms of the space, or by intervening in the 'programme' of public places, we create new opportunities for particular activities or groups and we possibly reduce the chances for other users or other groups." (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001, p.73)

Here is probably where Sandercock's idea of opening up story-telling processes amongst stake-holders proves valuable. I discuss Hajer and Reijndorp's ideas elsewhere, however, I am inclined to point out their seemingly masculinist perspective, not to diminish the value of what they advocate, even when that is surveillance technologies and gates in urban public spaces. I see an interesting contradiction in the economy of fears in the city, upon which Hajer and Reijndorp too rely in constructing their perspectives for new public domains. The contradiction lies in the fact that they seem to embrace what Sandercock calls the "hardware approach" of surveillance and policing, in order to tackle the economy of fears in the city.

To me, the contrast between their advocacy and Sandercock's (1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2003) or Forester's (2000) shows a different ontological position towards managing diversity in space. On the one hand experts must explore new ways of knowing by getting our hands dirty, listening to the unheard voices, stimulating story telling and becoming story tellers ourselves; and on the other hand we should explore new ways of doing things by looking at old ways of doing things but in new ways. Seen in this light then, these positions are rather complimentary; as Sandercock has philosophically pointed out concerning cultural inter-reliance and what I called self-refutation, these positions need each other to negotiate against the supremacy of one or the other. I believe that these positions point to the common direction of redefining the problem of urban space in unexpected and inspiring terms.

"The legal frameworks of planning in the West have been embedded in a particular conception of democracy as a form of majority rule in a multiparty system, and a corresponding belief that the right to difference disappears once the majority has spoken. […] For the most part, planners have not questioned the modernist paradigm of 'one law for all', in spite the precedents in feminist planning literature, which have challenged the universalism of the legal framework of planning, a framework which has generally been regarded as neutral, or unbiased, with respect to age, gender, religion or culture. Applying a critical lens to this framework reveals, however, that it is underpinned by all sorts of implicit assumptions – about what constitutes a 'normal household'(single family housing); about gender relations and their spatial expression (women occupying domestic space, men public space) […]" (Sandercock 2003, p.130)

Hajer and Reijndorp try to break the embedded, racialized narrative of the supreme white culture in predominantly white cities. I believe, though, that like many of us they too are

oscillating between embedded norms and alternative ways to approach the issue of strangers living together. Hajer and Reijndorp mention Burgers' "coloured space"[327] as one of the different "landscapes" supplying diversity in the city. However, they take a rather neutral stand regarding –*isms*; the various discriminatory dividing lines. They discuss extensively enclaving and the archipelago of enclaves, and Reijndorp himself has suggested[328] that indeed cultural exchange is feasible in parochial realms as long as we try to see them in new ways. Hajer and Reijndorp's ideas seem powerful in their pragmatism, as do Sandercock's in their humanity.

The Good Life

Lefebvre, in his *Urban Revolution*, provides an explanation, in my opinion, for what may be the underlying hope of Sandercock in her *Cosmopolis II*. Her focus on multiculturalism as a means to bring about a 'good life' for all in the cities is among others, her answer to "global struggle." Lefebvre (2003)[1970], discussing the urban guerrilla activities erupting in big cities in North and South America, and the prospects for such a crisis to erupt in Asia, writes:

> "The enormous numbers of peasants, the latent or violent pressure, questions of agrarian reform and industrialization – all continue to mask the urban problematic. This situation helps explain the theory according to which the 'global city,' incapable of transformative actions, will fall victim to the 'global struggles.'" (Lefebvre (2003) [1970], p.147)

He then elaborates on three possibilities according to which socialist countries could respond to the "urban problematic." In the third possibility, Lefebvre makes a hypothesis:

> "[…] legal bodies and institutions will grow increasingly aware of the urban problematic; the transformation will take place gradually through legal means." (Lefebvre (2003) [1970], p.147)

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327 "[...] landscapes of immigrants and minorities."(Hajer and Reijndorp 2001, p.80)

328 Public Space Seminar Aalborg, 01.04.2005. "Architects and designers should open up towards unpredictable ways of conceiving public spaces, their users and the users' behaviours." This is one of the challenging ideas that Reijndorp presented during his lecture. I claim that this should indeed be pursued while being conscious that often we should review our own prejudices, as well as unveil systemic discrimination. When Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) suggest that we should look at enclaves as bear-

ing potentials for new kinds of public domains, we must think what it means to look at possible racism or other –isms, as bearing potentials for new publicness. Where do we put the limit to what we revisit and what we have to surmount? It seems that this is a challenging process requiring negotiations as much as it requires scrutinising norms, stereotypical thinking and prejudice. Another grimmer perspective would have such advocacy registered as liberal and try once more to mask the power struggles between socially divided groups. One thing is to accept such divisions as a reality to work within, and another to

Similarly, Sandercock hopes that by working patiently within the framework of multiculturalism, the experts, legal bodies and institutions will get sensitised to grass-roots problems. While advising us to listen to the voices of the marginalised, Sandercock sees possibilities for grass-roots social transformation, supported by a more inclusive body politics. Legal means are adjusting to the demands for a good life for all. This 'all,' I find somehow problematic in Sandercock's story, especially regarding conflicts of interest and representation amongst groups with different political resources. Redistribution must include not only equal rights for cultural representation but also economic means for upward social mobilisation, or simply better living standards. She seems to consider the social conflict inherent in such transformations, however, as negotiable through the dialectic terms of therapeutic planning with the help of story-telling. The *dialectic* here consists in the direct encounter of opposing forces (possibly more than two) without them destroying one another. In this sense, when the various stake holders of an urban dispute get the support of sensitised authorities to work on their resentment and different or opposing interests, then they will be given equal opportunities to tell their stories, however painful to each other. Sandercock mentions that such processes are time-consuming but their results are long-lasting. I understand her point of view and accept her advocacy. In her way by foregrounding the need for transparent interaction with and within the grass-roots, she addresses the issue of rules imposed to find "happiness," which Lefebvre also points out.

> "Should the science of the urban phenomenon respond to pragmatic requirements, to immediate demands? Planners, programmers, and users want solutions. For what? To make people happy. To order them to be happy. It's a strange way of interpreting happiness." (Lefebvre (2003) [1970], p.141)

Sandercock often mentions the "good life," remarking on its vagueness concerning different groups' aspirations and views of it. Therefore, an institutionalised participatory politics of urban life would *have* to allow the views of marginalised groups to be expressed and considered by other groups. To my understanding, and with the help of Lefebvre and Sandercock, for such a process to succeed a wider understanding of difference might be of help, if persistently conceptualised, discussed and challenged in what we call the public arenas of the city. Maybe this is part and parcel of what Lefebvre calls the *critique of everyday life*.[329]

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perpetuate such divisions as if they are inherent human conditions, essential truths that we should see in different or 'new' ways.

329 "Everydayness is not found within the "urban" as such but in and through generalized segregation: the segrega-

tion of moments of life and activities. The critical approach comprises the criticism of objects and subjects, sectors and domains. In showing how people live, the critique of everyday life builds an indictment of the strategies that lead to that result." (Lefebvre 2003, p.140)

Diversity

A wider conception of difference within the realm of urban space seems crucial, as it can prove the perpetuating injustices harboured in the city due to enclaving difference as such. It is instrumental for our understanding of *difference*, and with the help of a critical analysis of peoples' everyday lives, to recognise multifaceted segregation not as essence, but as construct.[330] At the same time, however, we have to acknowledge and analyse the relations amongst various enclaves, segregations, and segregating processes.

> "The affirmation of difference can include (selectively, that is, during a critical check of their coherence and authenticity) ethnic, linguistic, local, and regional particularities, but on another level, one where differences are perceived and conceived as such; that is, through their relations and no longer in isolation, as particularities. […] the urban can be defined as a place where differences know one another and, through their mutual recognition, test one another, and in this way are strengthened or weakened." (Lefebvre 2003, p.96)

What Lefebvre sees as an existing, though overlooked dimension of urban life, Sandercock sees as justification for and recognition of multicultural practices and politics. A realisation can come from this: multicultularism(s), as Sandercock suggests, have existed from time immemorial in everyday life practices and the 'dialectics' of encountering difference; it has been the states' aspirations,now and in the past, that limit wider penetration of such inclusive concepts in their centres. This is best exemplified in space by Haussmannean Paris, or modernist planning. The official verdict for diversity is expulsion, and the homogenising and oblivious abstraction of the city's complexities, still hinder us from imagining possible futures.

> "My discussion has provided at least seven policy directions. […] A fifth requirement is a better understanding of how urban policies can and should address cultural difference. This includes issues of design, location, and process. For example, if different cultures use public and recreational space differently, then new kinds of public spaces may have to be designed, or old ones re-designed, to accommodate this difference. Space also needs to be made available for the different worshipping practices of immigrant cultures […] And when cultural conflicts arise over different uses of land and buildings, of private as well as public spaces, planners need to find

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[330] A construct, be it of social, economic, cultural, or other nature.

more communicative, less adversarial ways of resolving these conflicts, through participatory mechanisms which give a voice to all those with a stake in the outcome." (Sandercock 2003, p.152)

Sandercock believes that working towards a multicultural city empowers us to challenge our positions, assumptions and knowledge. Furthermore, space seen through the perspectives of different groups of urbanites evokes a deeper understanding of what is possible in order to facilitate social diversity without perpetuating social injustices. Facing our own inefficiencies can be less traumatic in the context of a transformation process, of which experts are also a part. Acknowledging our weaknesses and weaving them into *our* story-telling(s) may prove enlightening for our colleagues, for our fellow strangers, and for ourselves. As I have implied earlier, and with the help of Sandercock, redefining the problem of an urban public space that caters to social justice rather than discriminations, requires a shared, transparent and rigorous introspection. This introspection needs to be dialectical in order to be an awakening and constructive experience, even if it echoes conflict.

OLOHUONE[331]: A DESIGN AGENDA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

"If it is true that forests of gestures are manifest in the streets, their movement cannot be captured in a picture, nor can the meaning of their movements be circumscribed in a text. Their rhetorical transplantation carries away and displaces the analytical, coherent proper meanings of urbanism; it constitutes a 'wandering of the semantic' produced by masses that make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order."
(De Certeau 1988, p. 102)
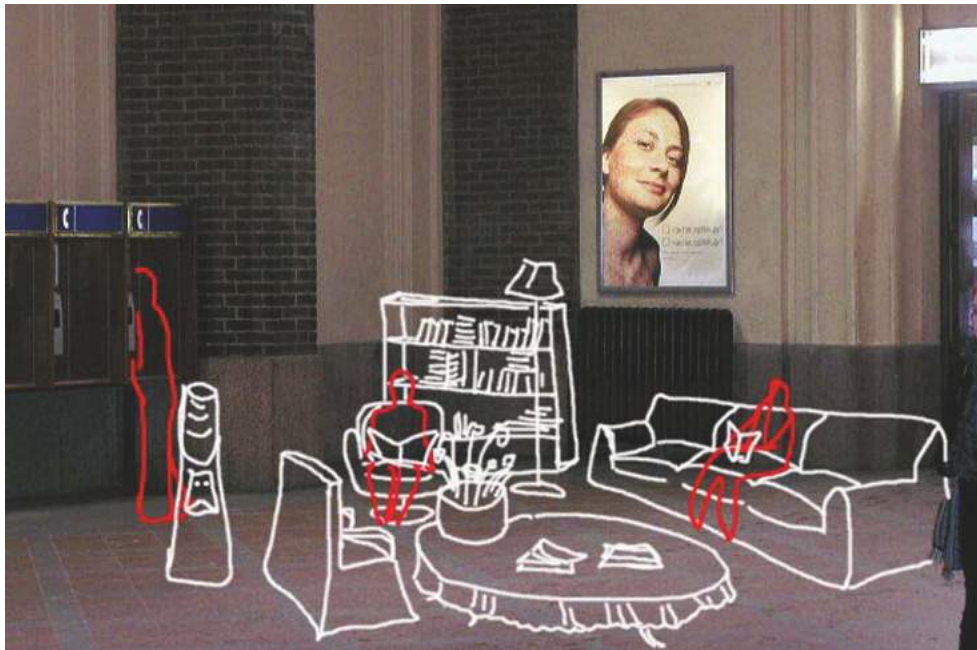
Drawing of *Olohuone*. 2005.

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331 *Olohuone* translates into English as *living room*.

In search of the right furniture for *Olohuone*. 2005.

Olohuone was set up in the West Hall of Helsinki Railway Station on the 21st of September 2005, and it was dismantled after approximately a week, on the morning of the 29th of September. It was a symbolic recreation of a domestic environment, with all the relevant connotations of a supposed 'privacy' within the context of a public space. The recognition of the station as an indistinct public space with its *immobile order* co-inspired me to bring a symbolic representation of a domestic environment inside the station. The proposed displacement intended to challenge the dichotomy between public and private in general, and to disturb some of the prescribed norms of the particular space. The status of the station as a public place accessible to all on certain vague conditions, the strict surveillance and policing, the flows of commuters and travellers, along with the 'islands' of people who use the space as a place to meet and repose without necessarily consuming (and basically without the facilities to do so), all these were reasons for me to decide that the station was the ideal context for my experiment.

Olohuone was intended to be a multicultural arrangement in order to welcome various groups of urbanites, including Somalis. Nevertheless, while assembling the pieces if this three-dimensional collage, e.g. furniture, books and fixtures, it became apparent that *Olohuone* was going to be a culturally multilayered living room. The elements constituting *Olohuone* were bought from recycling centres, second-hand shops, and non-profit charity centres. These objects surely had a Finnish background; however, with their aging patina, textures, some carefully planned details, and the overall arrangement, the aim was to create a culturally indistinct environment. Here the aspiration was that Finnishness would not exclude other identities, but rather welcome them. On the day of dismantling *Olohuone*, the majority of its elements were taken to a recycling centre for charity. The books that I brought to the installation for people to read, exchange and take, came from the Pasila City Library, where I hand-picked them from big containers. The same recycling centre that collected the rest of the elements of *Olohuone*, also collected the books that were not taken.

The material through which I communicated *Olohuone*, was in Finnish, Swedish, Russian, and the Somali language. The illustration featured me sitting in one of the armchairs of the installation facing the Helsinki Railway Station and its iconic clock tower. The text of the poster, and the invitation-flyer, read:

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 21.09.05, 15:00.

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 22.09.05, 09:59.

> ***Olohuone*** the installation
>
> For the living room of the city   This is not art, or is it?
>
> Private in public or public in private?
>
> What is private and what is public space?
>
> Does public space belong to all of us equally?
>
> Who is all and how equally?
>
> … may I sit next to you?

Despite the planning and aspirations for the installation nothing could be guaranteed beforehand concerning its impact on people and their responses.

In the following chapters I present and discuss *Olohuone*. I analyse it and bring forth meanings concerning the nature of this particular installation within the particular context of the Helsinki Railway Station. First there is an account of observations based on a loose written diary that was accompanied by a photographic one. Then, a series of issues are raised and discussed that ultimately shed light on the research implications of this installation.

The 'whys' and 'hows' of the following discussion are largely inspired by the views of Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp, as they present them in their book, *In Search of New Public Domain*.[332] Hajer and Reijndorp provide an analysis, but more significantly for me, a strategy towards functioning public spaces. Their strategic perspective is valuable because it is concrete and abstract enough to be inspiring and debatable. Numerous concepts and ideas are discussed further on in order to contextualise *Olohuone* within my research on public space and socio-spatial discrimination.
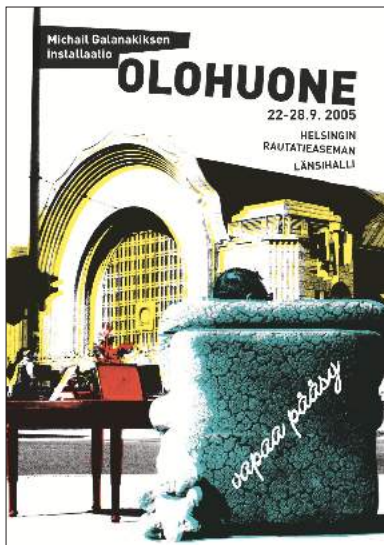
The two sides of the *Olohuone* flyer. Graphic design by Reka Kiraly.

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[332] Hajer, M. & Reijndorp, A. (2001). *In Search of New Public Domain*. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers.

5.2 Diary

Wednesday 21st of September (setting up *Olohuone*)

After some time building the installation and putting the furniture in its place, people start showing interest. They jump the ropes which are supposedly here to prevent people from doing just that and to let us build the installation in peace! A Russian woman asks if she can buy the furniture and carpets, others are just coming and sitting down. Vesna, the friend who is helping me, is also supporting me through my anxiety, saying that it is OK that people are taking the opportunity to rest. Only one woman (Finnish, around 55) gets angry after she reads the poster. She comes close to tell me more or less this: "You [foreigners] must change your way. We [Finns] must take back our space, not like the rest of the European Countries that are taken by Americans. We must take back our space; look we are becoming Africa!" The same woman goes on next to the poster stand to lecture a young African mother who is reading the information while carrying her baby. The lady is still angry and makes gestures while talking and pointing at me a few times. For a minute I panic at the prospect of her staying and making a scene. Luckily, after a while she leaves. Luckily, this is the train station, where people come and go. Later at night, when I visit *Olohuone* to check it out, Bogdan is with me. The place is fully occupied. I have requested some ropes from the station, Pirjo in particular, to put around *Olohuone* till the opening day. They are not giving people any hint whatsoever not to use *Olohuone* since the opening is for the next day! In fact it seems that the minute the installation is here, with or without ropes around it, it is for public use and that is that. Earlier Vesna and I put the sofa pillows under the black-board table, so they wouldn't get stolen before the opening. By now [22:45] people have found and are using the pillows, but despite my worries none is missing. Nevertheless, I feel scared at the possibility of finding a messed up installation the next morning.

Thursday 22nd of September (the official opening day)

In the morning *Olohuone* is occupied by people sitting on the sofas and in the armchairs, some reading,others just resting. They all seem comfortable being there. Totally at home. Four girls are lying on the two sofas.

One of the girls is practically sleeping. A man left; he must have been sitting in the same arm-chair for at least an hour and a half. Teemu installs the water cooler. Immediately and without any hesitation people start to use it and drink water. Two coloured boys approach the water cooler and act as if they are stealing when they drink some water. It is funny how they look around and at me. Up to this point, *Olohuone* seems to be occupied mainly by Finns (slightly more female then male) and Caucasians (basically Westerners).

I watch the people confronting *Olohuone* upon entering the station; some elderly women seem pleasantly surprised, smile and approach the poster stand to read what this is. Most people read, stand a bit with a look of surprise or amazement on their faces and continue

on their way. Few are crossing into the territory of *Olohuone*, especially when they are on a programmed route, and the "living room" (*Olohuone*) is already full. It seems that they need a special invitation. Could it be that at this point only the courageous ones are using *Olohuone*?

Trying to find allies in the station who would maybe share the responsibility of keeping an eye on *Olohuone*, I wave at a policemen and a policewoman patrolling the area and started chatting with them, explaining what this is and asking if they could patrol *Olohuone* from time to time. They smiled at me and said that I should ask this from the security people 'vartija,' the men, basically, in black uniforms. I apologise and thank them. The stress has made me colour-blind; I knew about the difference in the colour of the uniform, blue for police and black for vartija, but I forgot it. In the afternoon one woman travelling to Riihimäki sees me tidying up the place, understands that I am the one responsible for Olohuone, and comes to me and says: "I had a difficult start today and I wasn't so well. You made my day." This woman was to become a friend of *Olohuone*.

Later, people start to come; many friends. My brother, who has arrived from Crete, brought with him tsikudiá, a strong traditional Cretan spirit made from grape seeds, and also kserotígana, Cretan pastries covered in honey and nuts. We start offering these to people who are sitting in *Olohuone* and to friends who come thinking this is an exhibition. This isn't of course the case, and most of them just spend time standing outside looking at what is happening inside *Olohuone*. Not the point at all. Anyway, it is a nice event, though it turns out that people didn't pay the attention I hoped they would to Helena's performance, from 17:15 and lasting almost an hour. She was very supportive to volunteer to my call for some performance on the opening day. Basically she wears white clothes and is the 'space doctor' who plays with people, one at a time, a game involving tarot and fortune telling. She wanted to discuss people's spatial associations and experiences. She talks with a few people, but apparently the idea that she is going to playfully attract or invite people to *Olohuone* doesn't really work, as there is not need for it. However, the fact that she is here is only positive for the ambience.

In the evening, a dark-dressed and gothic looking company of young Finns arrives and openly occupies half of *Olohuone*. They seem to be trying to show that this is their space too and provokingly and without asking for permission-why should they after all- appropriate space and make it 'theirs.' I totally freak out, they are so open in this appropriation, and they start asking for more and more sweets. I get scared that they are going to keep asking forever! Looking at them, though, I realize that they are quite conscious of the 'disturbance' they are causing, I think that they even weigh my stressful reaction and my observing and mistrustful look! The purpose of their attires and looks has absolutely worked, on me at least. My brother is also trying to calm me down and finally I give up my first reaction of panic. I feel like a complete fool in regard to those youngsters.

A Greek doctoral student at Helsinki University visits *Olohuone*. He was informed

about the opening from his mother in Greece, who read it in the national newspaper the previous day. He is reluctant at first to join in *Olohuone*, but eventually sits in an armchair and looks a bit at people. He gives me very positive feedback, saying he thinks this is a well-thought installation. I don't know what exactly he means and if he is just trying to be polite. Later, a homeless-looking elderly man comes in with his bags, kneels down in front of the book case and starts opening his bags. Finally he takes out a bottle of soft drink and a small ceramic statue of Santa Claus. He places these two artefacts by and on the bookcase and then he leaves. He is the only person I have witnessed decorating *Olohuone*, and behaving as if it is a kind of shrine.

The sound system was installed earlier in the day. Matti, the sound design professor from the University of Art and Design Helsinki, came to install it along with Eero, the sound designer for *Olohuone*. Then, an old acquaintance of Matti's came by, a slightly tipsy man around forty. His idea is to provoke people by talking to them or asking them things like: "What's on TV tonight? What are we going to do this evening?" It seemes as if the opening day was a success and full of positive energy and encouraging feedback!

Friday 23rd of September

This is a day I am very much afraid of. The weekend is starting and the usual weekend drunkenness period will start from this evening. Who knows what can happen tonight in/to *Olohuone*.

The day progresses quite smoothly. People seem to like it very much as well as the water dispenser that has been installed since yesterday. The water bottles are being emptied so fast one after the other! Teemu was suggesting that for such a place, one to two bottles a day would be enough; it is turning to be three bottles. It is becoming anti-economical for my budget, and I decide to take the water dispenser away for the weekend and bring it back on Monday, and then have it here on and off. I also decide that I don't want to take the risk of leaving the dispenser all night at *Olohuone*, fearing that without me there to change the empty bottle someone could get aggressive and break it. The tipsy Finnish man visits again in the late afternoon and today he explains why his attitude is to be provocative. He sees *Olohuone* as a stage for him to poke at people and, as he says, to wake Finns up by shouting at them things like: "Stop talking on the mobile! What are we doing tonight?"

Later in the evening an elderly lady with a hat is looking at the books on the book shelves and at the framed old pictures of the Railway Station on the small round table. She seems interested. After some thought she joins in *Olohuone* and sits down with the rest of us strangers.

Every night I tidy up and bring a few things that could be lost or easily destroyed into the cellar of the Railway Station; the lace cloths I use to decorate the sofas and armchairs, the framed pictures, the woollen blankets and of course the water dispenser. The floor lamp is also a concern to me, but I think that it is too important to remove it; it stays for the whole

time. When I leave *Olohuone* every night, I make sure to turn on the CD player, so I arrange for my departure from *Olohuone* to be as nice as possible and thus to relax my anxiety of leaving "my" creation to strangers, the unknown public. The CDs I usually put on are Mozart and Haydn; very rarely, I put on, the CDs that Eero, the sound designer, has edited for *Olohuone*. The space is already too large and noisy for this kind of conceptual audio material with, for example, coffee machine sounds.

Saturday 24th of September

There is no water dispenser.

Arriving at *Olohuone* this morning, we are happy to see that nothing is destroyed. We do the usual routine and clean and tidy up the place. I come back to the Railway Station twice to take pictures and inspect the place. Nothing is out of the ordinary; people are just enjoying the place, the soft sofas and armchairs and the books and music. The round table with a blackboard surface which we clean every morning, by now is in full use. People like to play with the chalk and write impressions or messages on the table. I take pictures of the blackboard table every night before leaving *Olohuone* to strangers.

In the evening we come back to tidy up *Olohuone*, take photos, play some music and burn the usual incense. This is something of a habit at *Olohuone*. After tidying up in the morning and, twice more in a day we burn incenses, like mire from Somalia, and incenses used in orthodox churches. They smell similar, with the Somalian being stronger as they are natural. So we do the same just now. *Olohuone* is quite full and among the people there are a couple of young Finns, stylish and self-confident in their way of occupying the space. Just after I put the pot with the burning incense under the small round table closer to the entrance doors of the station, the young man sitting closer covers it with a book. Apparently he doesn't like the incense. I think that this might be dangerous as the book can overheat and start burning, so I uncover the pot. The girl starts coughing ostentatiously; I asked if she is allergic and she says that it is just that the smell is too strong for both of them. I apologise, urging them to be patient, explaining that the smell will vanish in a matter of a few minutes, as the space is too large and the doors let in big volumes of air.

However, seeing their reaction, and not getting a lot of verbal feedback in general from the people using *Olohuone*, I dare myself to go on and challenge them so I can see more of their reaction. Me: "You obviously don't go to church very often!" (Forgetting in my nervousness that this was not the incense used in Lutheran churches). The girl: "Actually I do!" Me: (remembering) "Yes, but what church?" The girl: "Lutheran church! … and there we don't use incense. We Finns like natural scents." Me: "Well this (*Olohuone*) is for non-Finns too!"

In the night an elderly Finnish man talks to some younger men sitting on the sofa. I realize that he is trying to sell them something. I go closer and it seems that he is selling texts. I ask one of the girls who is actually buying one. He is selling his poems, 5€ each!

Sunday 25th of September

In the morning I go on with the routine and again Kostas helps me to clean up. I just noticed that the floor lamp has been damaged a bit. From the beginning the "hat" wasn't firmly attached to the wooden pole, therefore someone must have pushed the hat accidentally, and the cloth of the hat started touching the hot bulb. At a certain moment the cloth started burning and luckily someone took notice and turned off the bulb. So the damage isn't so big after all. The floor lamp, which was expensive, was offered to me for free by an antique shop on the condition that I bring it back after the installation. I get a bit worried but think that I will somehow fix the lamp or try to explain to the owner of the antique shop.

A couple of friends drop by. One comes straight from last night's party. Leena, my Finnish supervisor visits. After a while a woman who had visited *Olohuone* the first day and talked to me comes by and offers to help me fix the lamp. She goes to the florist and brings some wire to attach the hat steadily on the wooden pole. A Hungarian man working for a Finnish company is very interested in *Olohuone*; he practically interviews me.

In the late afternoon Eero brings me the audio material including the original living room sounds I had provided him. Right now I know that I have failed with my sound design aspirations.

I visit *Olohuone* at different times of the day and take videos and photos.

Monday 26th of September

Restore the water dispenser.

Vesna helps me today.

In the morning a Dutch man and his Finnish friend are sitting in two armchairs. They realize that I am the person responsible for *Olohuone* and the first one starts to ask me ironically about the meaning of all this. He seems to expect eccentric answers. I get upset and in a few very sober words, I end our discussion.

Later a few people tell me how much they like *Olohuone*.

The Railway Station manager visits the installation and he is quite positive. He also asks if I had any problems with people or faced any aggressiveness or hostility. I have no incident to mention.

Later, I get a call from a Finnish man who wants to express his positive feelings concerning *Olohuone*. I am surprised and happy to have such a response from a stranger, who went to the trouble of finding my GSM number to call me. I ask him if he could send me an e-mail with his impressions of *Olohuone*. This is what he wrote:

> "It was a magical evening. I had just seen in the movies "moving castle," and was heading home through the railway station. Then I noticed those sofas and piles of books. I decided to wait for the train there. First I was curious enough to ask, since

there were quite a many people there, sleeping on the sofas, that if some of these people were working in this peace of art. No one admitted doing so, and I soon realised that it really was the case.

I found comfortable chair, started to read, and also started gradually talk with people in nearby sofas. There was one girl beside me, who was reading also (her own book, a little surprise here) and one man on the opposite sofa. It was relaxing peaceful moment, near midnight, and somehow, being in the same "livingroom," inside the same context, it was binding us together. We started to talk, about this and that, some jokes, some pauses, about books, about life as a journey and destination, about love and destiny.

People were different, it was obvious, some were old, some young, some sober, some drunk, some hade money, some were penniless. Still it was ok in that place and time.

I enjoyed the conversation so much, I chose to skip my train, and take the next one, after an extra hour. When people started to go one by one, this girl I mentioned, waved, and when this man opposite to me went, he came back, and then winked, like he had asked if I wanted to join the same taxi ride, if the direction was the same. I said I would take the train, and so he went.

There was one man, who planned to go to Kallio, but he said he had no money, and he asked me if I knew about the tram schedules. I didn't know about those, but I gave him ticket money for the bus. Then it was also time for me to leave and head home." (Monday, 26 Sep 2005 21:36:02. Electronic mail.)

A Finnish man, in his thirties, approaches me while I am tidying up the books in the bookcase. He says that he likes *Olohuone* and the idea behind it very much and asks what will happen to all the books after the end of the installation. I tell him that from the next day the books will be free for the people to take. He is happy to hear that and goes on to tell me his story. He says roughly,

> "Ten years ago I was dreaming of a place like this to exist in this area. I was wondering why there isn't a sofa to sit on. And now you made it. I was here on Saturday night and talked to some youngsters, they liked it very much. I thought that drunken people would mess the place, but everyone liked it and they, like the youngsters, didn't have any reason to destroy it. I am surprised that even the nice pillows are still here!"

Then later in the evening, when I go back to *Olohuone* to take pictures and inspect the place, I find a note placed by the plants, on the small table.

On my last visit tonight, I again take pictures and observe people visiting *Olohuone*. I notice

a strange looking couple; the man is a bit unstable in his way of moving while the woman is very self-controlled. (I remember that I saw the same couple the previous day).

Later, I take away the water dispenser again for the night and while tidying up the sofa pillows I find under the pillows a small, sealed, round pill. I try to read the name on the back, it is in Cyrillic and I read "TRIP." I throw it away, and later I think how stupid I was that I didn't take a photo of it.

Once again I turn on the music and leave.
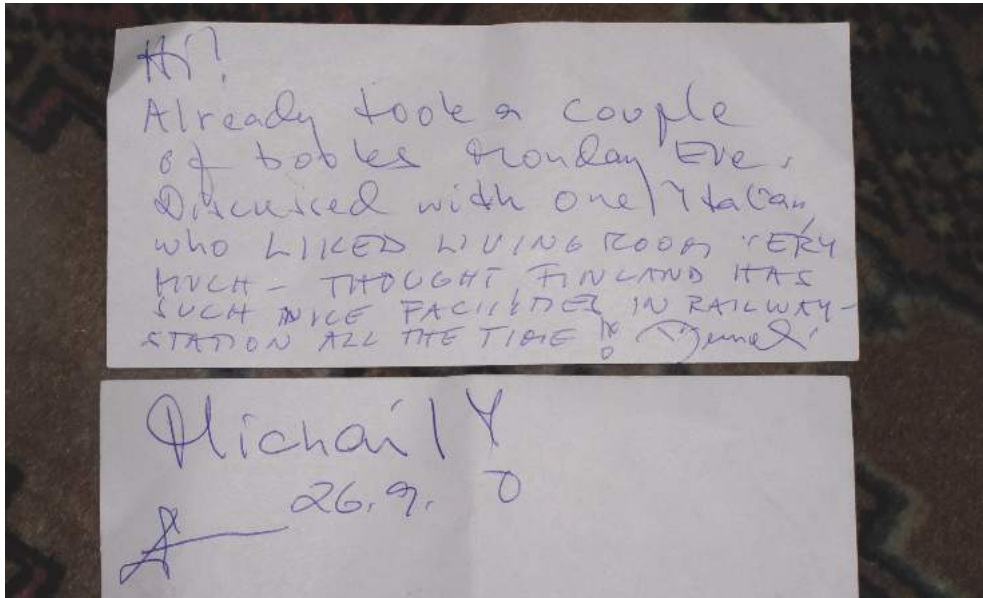
Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 29.09.05, 22:32. A note.

Tuesday 27th of September

I clean the place around 11:00.

I put stickers on the book case encouraging people to take books they would like to have. The signs are in Finnish and Swedish.

A young Finnish woman, a Book-Crosser (members of Book-Crossing exchange books in public spaces with the help of the World Wide Web), was putting books around the installation for people to take. She expressed her enthusiasm for *Olohuone* and told me that some time during the previous night a group of Book-Crossers had gathered in *Olohuone* and were offering cookies to the passers-by inviting them to join *Olohuone*.

I had approached Book-Crossing.com when I was trying to figure out ways of handling the books that Pasila City Library offered for Olohuone. I asked for help in advertising the fact that there would be books at the Helsinki Railway Station if people wanted to come and read and eventually take some home with them.

In the evening I realize that the article about *Olohuone* in Helsingin Sanomat (biggest Finnish

newspaper) was wrong about unaccompanied people being reluctant to join in *Olohuone*. I see many men and women who are alone coming in and sitting down. Right now, at 20:05, I can see a family with a mother, father and young boy, an elderly homeless man, a younger homeless man, a woman, a soldier, and another young man.

Later a drunken Finnish woman in her late 30s enters the Railway Station and gets startled by *Olohuone*. She looks dazed and starts to shout in Finnish something like this "What is this? Is this art? What are you all doing here? You are reading books! HA! This is shit! You are SHIT!" Some people look at each other and smile, others don't blink an eye.

At night, around 22:00, I call security to open the door to the cellar for me. This is how I get access to the cellar and the CD player after working hours. The guards come and see an elderly homeless man sleeping in an armchair. They wake him up and help him to go out; the man is using crutches. The guards then come back to open the door for me all smiling. I feel sad. One tells me that they wouldn't get rid of him otherwise. One evening I accidentally alarmed the guards myself; I was trying to close a waste bin that was somehow broken and didn't close. I finally kicked it and all of the sudden I saw the guards coming towards me. I smiled and nodded and they left. I then decided to tape the waste bin; this bin was near *Olohuone* and I didn't like the appearence of neglect that could give the environment. Or maybe I felt that because of *Olohuone* I had a say and a right to act, to somehow keep the space around clean and tidy.

Wednesday 28th the September

After cleaning and tidying up *Olohuone*, a Somali acquaintance drops by. For two consecutive mornings I put on a CD with Somali poetry. He gets surprised, says that he will come back, and leaves. After a few minutes he comes back along with a friend of his. They sit down in the armchairs and listen to the poetry narrated and sung. I offer them some of the last Cretan sweet pastries. When I am lighting the incense they see me and are surprised. My acquaintance understands the meaning of these small rituals and smiles: "You also have incense in orthodox churches!" He goes on to humour me: "You know we Somalis have traditions belonging also to Sufism and according to one, when the smoke of the burning incense goes upwards then the prayers are heard by God, if the scented smoke goes in other directions then there is something wrong…" The truth is that inside the station the smoke is going in all directions. Today, like yesterday, an elderly Somali man visits. He sits in the armchair next to the loud speaker listening to the poetry and having a pleasant grin on his face. He spends half an hour at *Olohuone* and then leaves. I realize that visitors to *Olohuone* don't really take books; I wonder if the sign is too subtle and I go on to write, in Finnish and Swedish, with chalk on the black frame of the poster stand that the books are to be taken. I also place piles of books outside *Olohuone* and by the poster stand. In the evening a group of five young men ask the guards to remove from Olohuone the annoying Finnish man, who is a bit tipsy again. They have appropriated the space by putting the round blackboard table in the middle of their

company and are chatting with each other. They seem very relaxed and have created a nice atmosphere, which of course they didn't want spoiled by the intrusive man. I wonder on what conditions they would welcome a stranger as part of their company. I go around collecting trash and they don't pay any attention to me. I put on Mozart. People still don't take books. There are two homeless men sitting on the other sofa. They are poorly dressed and carry plastic bags. They are talking with a third man. One of the two homeless men is covered with one of the blankets from Olohuone. The young company are playing with the chalk, drawing and writing on the table. Another homeless person is joining the rest and they all talk like old friends. This is a nice image of Olohuone. The two homeless men on the sofa nodded to me to take a picture of them. I happily do and realize that one of the two men had already posed for me maybe two years ago at the station. I have used his picture in a few of my presentations. This is the last day of Olohuone at the Helsinki Railway Station.

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone* 28.09.05, 19:46.

Thursday 29th of September

In the morning FIDA (a charity), Kierrätyskeskus (the city recycling centre), and Teemu come and take all the *Olohuone* artefacts. Out of six boxes of books, half have been taken by the people. *Olohuone* vanishes very quickly.

Going up and down between the hall and the cellar, where I have had a storage room, I meet employees of the railway. Two women are trying to be polite and for the first time say some-

thing like: "It's a pity *Olohuone* is finished." I think they don't really mean it, but I agree that it must have been an interesting spectacle or experiment for them too, to see how such an event would evolve. In fact, at least twice, a company of three or four male workers from the railway were sitting at *Olohuone* having their lunch and coffee break.

While still up in the West Hall struggling with the heavy wooden poster stand, an employee of the Railway Station, a man in his fifties in his neat dark blue uniform, comes towards me and after a few words in Finnish and a facial expression of discontent, he starts telling me in English something like this: "It's good that this is finished! This place was really bad!" Me: "You must be one of the few that didn't like *Olohuone*." Him: "No! No! It was bad, every morning having all these people sleeping!" while he was mimicking people sleeping and snoring. "You have to push! Push out!" making the gestures of pushing people out and away. He is one of those people, I thought later, who might prefer to see people (homeless?) dead than sleeping at the station. Pushing the homeless away and out of sight doesn't make the homelessness issue any better. In this respect I was glad that most of the time a few homeless people found a refuge in *Olohuone*. This was the end of the installation. Someone wrote in Latin on the blackboard table last night "everything changes, nothing is truly lost."

5.3 THE CONTENT OF A STRANGER'S PATH

The West Hall with the entrance facing Eliel Square is a different story. I am not interested in it for its vibrant life, but rather because of the lack of it. This must have been the reason why I insisted on locating *Olohuone* in this space.
Of the West Hall, Högström writes:

> "The West Hall, barrel-vaulted and lit by an iron-frame arched window, was originally known as the 'Main Exit', as passengers arriving in Helsinki collected their luggage at a counter at the north end of the hall before going out into the city. […] In the 1950s, the hall was furnished with rows of lockers for storing luggage. These were transferred to the luggage storage facility on the north side-the original luggage collection point-in 1991, and the spaciousness of the hall came into its own again." (Högström 2004, 57)

The brief description by Högström underlines once more the functionality of the station, and although it is a recently revised publication there is no mention of the exhibitions and cultural events that are housed in the West Hall.

Here you have it, a hall covered with a high barrel vault, connecting two concourses; the one of the main platform, and the shopping concourse of the West Wing.[333] Is it an empty

space anticipating content, a multipurpose room ready to host events, exhibitions, concerts, culture, events and spectacle? Is it a volume of *thin air*? We keep our expectations for this big room to ourselves; but still such expectations do exist.[334] The West Hall is a place of promises. It may seem *empty*, however I am convinced that it is not. It is also promising because with *Olohuone* I wished to temporarily help some of its potential to unfold amongst strangers.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2005. West hall.

The station is not solely a landmark; it is in addition what Jackson (1997b) calls "the Stranger's Path." Jackson refers to the parts of American cities that are the least known and respected by their citizens. The Path consists of the routes and areas that strangers to the city use. Jackson calls strangers not only the tourists, but mainly travelling men of low income. In fact, what Jackson writes about is the vernacular poor sides of a city and their importance as part of city culture. According to Jackson, the origin of the Stranger's Path is at the places of disembarkation, including railway stations. It is interesting how humanly he describes the areas around these landmarks of the Path, ambiguous areas, deviant places, sad at times and enjoyable at other. He claims:

> "No one, I suppose, would wish to see the Stranger's Path remain as it is: garish and dirty and decaying, forced to expend its vitality in mean and neglected streets, cheated of a final merger with the broader life of the city. Yet even in its present sad state it has the power to suggest the avenue it might become, given imaginative treatment." (Jackson 1997, p.28)

What can be seen today that Jackson couldn't see, is that after any given "imaginative treatment," his "Strangers Path" would transform into a smartened-up and gentrified tourist's spectacle. In any case, Jackson's contribution stands for me here for his description of different kinds of life that intertwine in and around railway stations. In addition he shows the possibility for the Path "serving an even more important role in the community" if it had "a final, well-defined objective."

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[333] This used to be the express freight depot, with changing functions from storing space, to special deliveries depot, to lost and found and baggage claim, eventually to a shopping complex opened in 2003 (Högström 2004, p.71-3).

.[334] In the part about *Olohuone* I refer to a visitor of the installation who described to me his *vision* for that space. *Olohuone* resembled his *vision*.

"For when the stranger, the transient, has finished his business, something in the lay-out of the city should invite him to linger and become part of the town, should impel him to pay his respects, as it were." (Jackson 1997, p.26)

Here comes the second point I would like to keep from Jackson, and this is his urge for con-nectedness. There should be an admittance of the everyday social importance of the station; this would be the first step, the step of acknowledgment. Then a policy should be developed in order for the station to be embraced by and to embrace city culture, its stake holders and their cultural representations; not only H&M. There is a cavity-like and modestly-sized space in the West Hall. In this discrete corner outside the path, a few youngsters at a time gather, discretely out of sight. These few square metres are certainly more worrisome for the Rail-way staff than the open floor of the West Hall.[335] It is the only place the authorities haven't indicated as a resting area and still youngsters use it to meet and socialise. The place is small and so are these gatherings; still they are disturbing for some people, inspired by the rhetoric about gangs overrunning the station and the surrounding area, as well as for the authorities who seem to have a very clear idea about what constitutes public and private and what is al-lowed. It is a sad fact that the latter rely more on what is common sense in a policed space than on open discussion.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2003. Entrance to the West Hall from Elielinaukio.

[335] As we will see in the next part, while I was consider-ing possible locations in the station for my installation, I understood that since that particular place lacked a use it could suit perfectly for *Olohuone* (Living Room). The management would have preferred if I would have cho-sen that *dead* space to install *Olohuone*; however they understood my need for centrality.
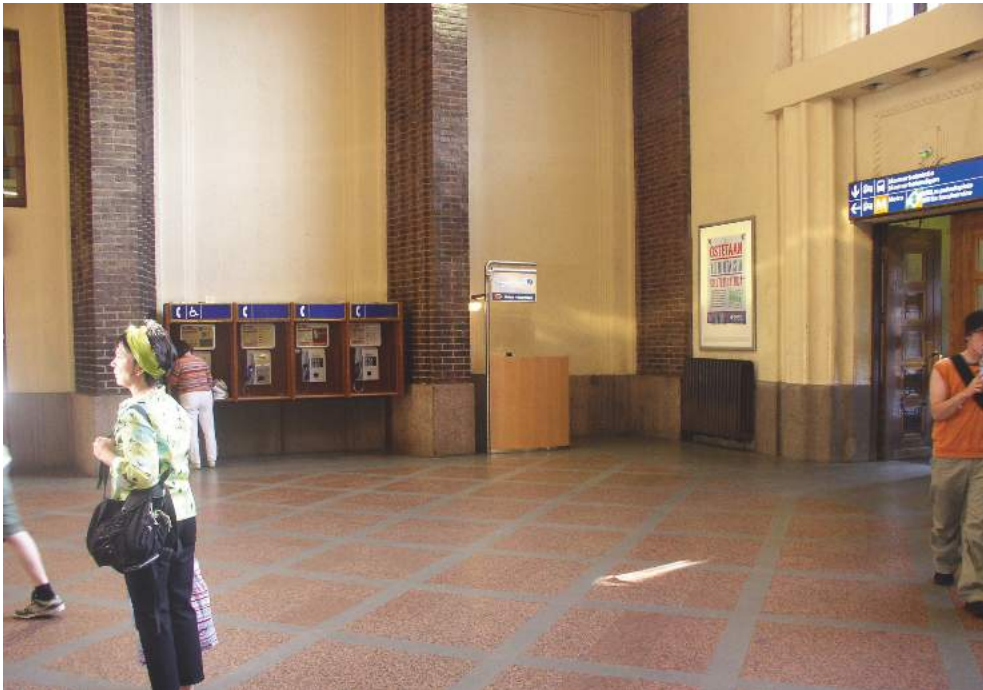
Helsinki Railway Station, 2005. West hall.

Helsinki Railway Station, 2005. A photographic exhibition at the West Hall.

People

> "Society has become an archipelago of enclaves, and people from different back-
> grounds have developed ever more effective spatial strategies to meet the people
> they want to meet, and to avoid the people they want to avoid […]"
> (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.53)

The people who came around to the other side of the marking ropes and joined in *Olohuone*
may be called participants, because indeed they participated in this urban experiment. The
difference in peoples' attitudes became apparent very soon, even when the installation was
still under construction. What came as a surprise, though, was the reaction of some col-
leagues and friends who at the official opening evening simply wouldn't join the installation.
They were basically around it, admiring, or just observing the spectacle of strangers sharing
the facilities of a "living room" brought into the Helsinki Railway Station. They, like many
other citizens of Helsinki, did not frequent the station; for them it was like an exhibition, a
tableaux vivant just like in a gallery. Even the fact that such an activity was brought to the
station, open for public use for all the time that the station was open – in rush hours and quiet
hours, during weekdays and on the weekend – was an awkward displacement for some, and
a pleasant surprise for others.

Olohuone was a comment on the discourse about the privatisation of public space.
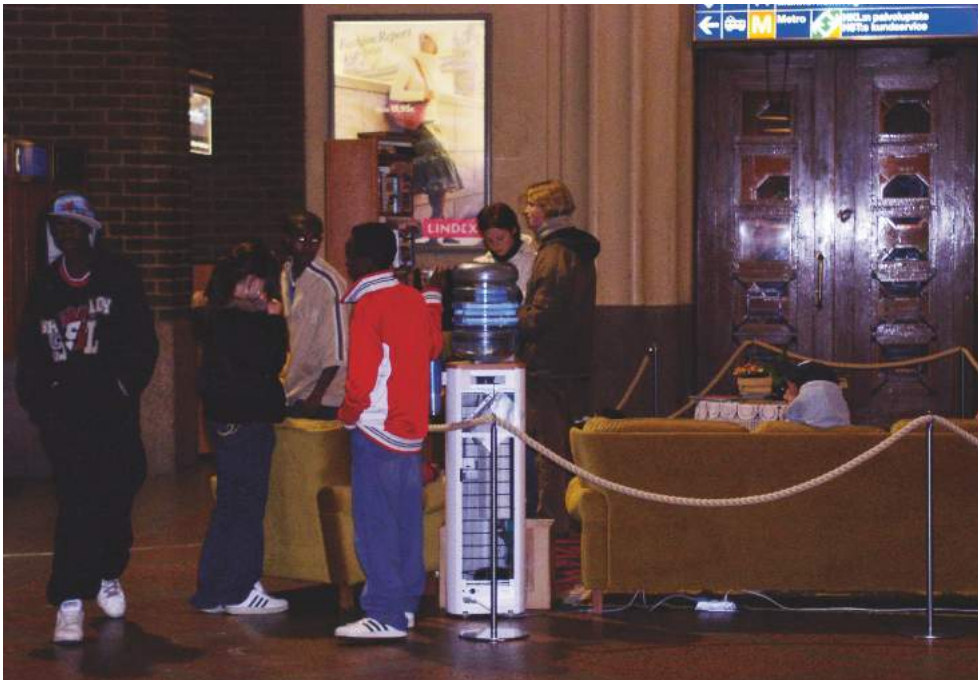
Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 22.09.05, 22:21.

"Significant public life moves inside from the streets." (Zukin 1991, p. 54)

A key idea was thus to bring private life into public. The arrangement, the colours, the textures, the informality of the installation, the softness of the furniture, the slowed-down rhythm of *Olohuone* as a place for repose, and maybe even the sweet melancholy of old and used objects brought together, worked surprisingly well for the western visitors of Helsinki, as well as for Finnish people who made up the majority of the guests at *Olohuone*, women and men in varying numbers depending on the day and the time of the day. From my photographic diary I have made a rough approximation of gender representation at *Olohuone* and I saw that during the morning time period, women made up 35% of the visitors, and 60% during mid-day. This percentage was sustained more or less in the evening time period, decreasing to 35% again in the night time.

Us & the 'Other'

"Spaces are being prestructured for certain modes of behaviour, which allows no opportunity for the very diversity and ambivalence we have identified as regards the enclave culture. But perhaps the need, or even the desire, for monoculturalism has been overestimated, while in fact design and policy can conceivably establish links between the environments of different groups of users that will not lead to conflict and trouble. […] When everyone is creating an individual, polycentric urban area it is precisely in the 'experienced time' that the challenges for a new public domain lie. Public domain may well come into being where places represent multiple and incongruent meanings."
(Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.68)

My sensitivity to matters of social exclusion, based on race and ethnicity among other factors, increased due to my research of socio-spatial discrimination in urban public space. In working with this particular segment of discrimination, I claim that a society that is unsettled with racial and ethnic issues is likely to be unsettled and in discomfort with other markers of difference, too. At the early stages of my doctoral research I discussed the issue of multiculturalism as diversity and openness to difference. I never stopped having doubts even about the need for such a discourse, given a long human history of seemingly inherent discriminatory aggression and violence. These were, and still are, my doubts on the feasibility of 'open minded' public spaces that support exchange, allow the spatial dominance of a group, but they don't eliminate the possibilities for other groups to be present. These public spaces are platforms for negotiations wherein we can challenge unquestionable societal norms.

The presence of Somalis in Finland, as I discuss elsewhere, has been a steering event for the Finnish welfare society, as one would expect it to be in a state that still today considers itself to be homogenous.[336] Indeed, Finnish people themselves much too often justify narrow-mindedness and a hesitance towards their foreigners by blaming the social homogeneity of Finland. In my quest to create *Olohuone* as a place with multiple meanings and multiple cultural layers, I included particularly Somali nuances in a spatial arrangement that could be characterized as distinctly Western. Despite the oriental carpets, the foreign books, the laces, the exotic incense, and even the strange assemblage of audio material, *Olohuone* was not a symbolic recreation of a Somali living room, or of a Finnish one. The idea, and maybe a reason for its appeal to people, was that this living room was a collage with certain inscribed meanings or messages allowing for others to be inscribed and manifested. This was my greatest personal challenge, namely to let go of the installation and let it be used, 'abused' or 'misused' by the public to which it was offered. This was, maybe naively, but sincerely my aim when burning incenses from Somalia and Greece, when on the last two days I put on Somali poetry and songs, when I would sort the Arabic, Somali, Russian and other foreign children's publications onto the top of the piles of books. As you can see I did try to manipulate what was happening at *Olohuone*. I did take out the lifestyle and fashion magazines when I realised that they were preferred to books, and that they were getting destroyed.

My efforts to influence the life of the installation, which I had envisioned and constructed, manifested in quite a few instances. It is evident that in between all the layers of meanings at *Olohuone*, there lay complimentary personal desires, ambitions and proper-use scenarios. This was a situation that filled me with anxiety, which guided me to adopt a strategy of paying more short visits at the installation to observe events closely, to document randomly, and to participate as a user of the space. In addition, I was checking if things were fine, and touching the place. I was tidying up, putting on music, and burning incense; manifesting ownership over something that was intended to be, and actually, was public. My excuse for cleaning the installation every day was that if people would see that *Olohuone* was messy they might make it messier. As long as I 'touched' *Olohuone* I was making sure that it would maintain a sense of dignity and safety that would be appreciated, especially by women and stigmatized groups that would feel as part of something warm and cared for. Of course "broken window theory" was in the back of my mind, therefore I did look after the living room as if it was mine, and I did abandon it for some hours so that I could let it be.[337]

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336 In everyday reality, how homogenous is a state that is officially bilingual, with an official linguistic minority (Swedish), a native minority (Saami people), and other minorities such as Russians, Estonians, Somali, and Vietnamese, Central and Latin Americans and others? I purposively disregard the Anglo-Saxons who may also be a minority in Finland but are certainly not considered one.

337 "James Wilson and George Kelling (1982) argue in their original statement of the thesis that even a single broken window in an urban neighborhood indicates a lack of care about urban space that invites other, more serious, criminal behaviour. A single broken window, they argue (31), indicates that a building and surrounding property will 'become fair game for people out for fun and plunder.' Such

My joy was paramount when, while checking *Olohuone*, I would find it fully occupied by a diverse spectrum of people, when people would be using it as I had programmed it. But even when people would be using *Olohuone* differently I still wouldn't do anything to alter the situation, since I only few times felt that I had the 'right' to do so. I was very happy when an elderly Somali man spent some time in *Olohuone* listening to the stories from his own country and then I saw him again. I was happy to realize that there were at least some people who were actually using the place for many hours each time they visited *Olohuone*. I was happy to see people resting and sleeping on the sofas.

Designing a place as a 'lived space' as Lefebvre (1991, p.38-39) puts it, may seem awkward since it is rather the unexpected that one is trying to house, with all its perils and surprises. It may be no surprise, then, that I would get very nervous when I witnessed large groups of people 'taking over' *Olohuone*, because I felt that they were seizing a place meant to be for all. Based on my direct observations, *Olohuone* wasn't popular with Somali women, or with people of colour in general; it wasn't popular among white-collar workers, as I am sure it wasn't popular with many other individuals for reasons one can only guess at. The absence of Somali women from *Olohuone* is not exceptional; Somali women in general don't circulate in the city centre and particularly the Railway Station. Hence, their presence rather than their absence at *Olohuone* would be exceptional. There were many occasions when I was pleasantly surprised to see young and elderly people together, homeless people sharing *Olohuone* with elderly women, regulars with passing travellers, well-dressed and poorly dressed, people who didn't feel the stress of being exposed sitting and relaxing in a busy station environment.

As I write these words all the images come alive again, and the faces are still vivid of some people I never talked to and I may never see again. I don't deny that the biggest impact on me came from those occasions on which I managed to establish contact with a few of the participants. And out of my introversion I rarely showed much interest for anyone in particular, the excuse being that I didn't want to intimidate the people to whom this place was offered. I was feeling less and less comfortable documenting the 'private' moments of people in the public sphere. Nevertheless, I documented many instances of the short life of *Olohuone*. And whenever I realized that an unexpected feature was just unravelling itself in front of my eyes, I was excited and admittedly scared; the fact was that *Olohuone* had gone public.

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a broken window is 'criminogenic,' as Kelling and Coles (1996, 15) term it. But the key to this argument is that the 'broken windows' are only a metaphor – and not for urban disinvestment. Rather, they are a metaphor for 'disorderly behaviour.' Make no mistake, proponents of the broken windows thesis are very clear about what – or rather *who* – needs to be policed and subject to strict control. 'The citizen who fears the ill-smelling drunk, the rowdy teenager, or the importuning beggar,' [...] " (Mitchell 2003a, p.200)

"For Wilson and Kelling, homeless people are little more than 'broken windows' that signal the deterioration of community and the ready availability of a neighborhood for crime. Broken windows must be fixed if flourishing neighborhoods are to be maintained-or so goes the theory." (Mitchell 2003a, p.199)
"'Broken windows,' in short, is a policy of 'zero tolerance' for behaviors and actions deemed disorderly or 'worrisome.'" (Mitchell 2003a, p.201)

There were many frustrating occasions after having checked the installation and realizing that *Olohuone* didn't attract much interest from Somalis.

I had to digest the fact that the issue of intercultural exchange had somewhat failed, while *Olohuone* had succeeded in bringing people closer together, and in a situation of repose, who would otherwise be avoiding or who would be indifferent to each other. This of course tells a lot about *Olohuone*, about me as the author, but also about the Finnish social context.

When trying to figure out how to program the installation so as to touch a sensitive chord in Somali people, I made an effort to consult the few Somalis I knew and soon ended up consulting a few Finnish people who had connections to Somalis. It being clear that I didn't want and could not recreate a folkloristic Somali environment or a Finnish one, I conveniently resorted in the idea of a hybrid place made of second-hand objects that would have warmth, and of course this didn't mean that everyone would agree with my realisation of such an ambiance. In fact, not being able to overcome my cultural background as an educated Greek man, I tried to create many different cultural attachments and nuances based on: stereotypes (oriental carpets and ottomans), as well as my own experience (a visit at a Somali family house in Helsinki), and some friends' and colleagues' knowledge of Somaliness (one came up with the idea of scents and sounds, another provided the incenses from Somalia).

Helsinki Railway Station.*Olohuone*, 27.09.05, 22:00.

In addition, all the texts for communicating the installation to the public had been in the four languages of the largest linguistic groups in Finland: Finnish, Swedish, Russian and Somali. I wanted to speak directly about Finnish internal situations and I consciously avoided English translations. I believed the cultural nuances would 'speak' to certain receptors while leaving the rest puzzled or indifferent. As a matter of fact, with *Olohuone* I wanted to embrace a certain otherness without overwriting local Finnish culture. In other words I wanted, without offending Finnishness, to promote the co-existance of otherness. In this important respect *Olohuone* was a partial success, as certain aspects of social otherness did manifest, while others I was hoping for didn't.

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 22.09.05, 17:49.

Opportunities

Early on while planning *Olohuone* there was a desire to bring some unsettlement right into the centre of the city, and the station has anyway been fertile ground for me to explore and experiment. When the management gave me the permission to go ahead with the installation, there was a hesitation from both parts. How far should I go in un-settling the norms of the space? Soon my prior idea to attach religious meanings and make a standpoint by staging Muslim religious practices as part of the installation was

dismissed. A Somali acquaintance and moderate Muslim teacher of Koran was positive, however I was skeptical as to the impact such a didactic ambiance would have on Somali youngsters, who frequent the underground level mostly, but also on Finns who might feel alienated. Finally, I preferred to make a patchwork of a few cultural nuances, weave them together so that they wouldn't stand out too awkwardly and let people relax and figure out what the place was about. Such an arrangement, though it may seem, or indeed was, a compromise favouring western culture, was still provocative to the station management.

The west hall of the station building regularly houses exhibitions that allow the space to maintain its slow rhythm without causing real congestions; the flux can still flow in between panels with photos. In this way this place takes on the role of an area tolerating a different rhythm within the station, as well as promoting cultural activities. In the case of *Olohuone*, its non-artistic aspiration and its experimental and interactive nature were more of a worrisome challenge for the authorities of the station. I find indicative of the latter some of the guard's doubts regarding the limits of tolerance within *Olohuone*. What was to be accepted and what not, would people be allowed to sleep, or were unclean people welcome? These were questions that astonished me, not for implying prejudice or discrimination -both for the shake of the orderly function of the station- but mostly because I faced my own naivety.

What was I proposing really? An oasis of tolerance within an institution with clear and safeguarded functions? Was I proposing a friction-tolerant 'island' that would provide refuge for the people who occasionally chat and socialize amidst the flux of the station crowds? Talking with guards made me recognise the fear of being exposed to absolute strangers, the stories about the tough environment of the station, the marginal people who have stigmatized the station as a potentially dangerous space. It reminded me about the fear felt by segments of the Helsinki populace that have been fed for years with information on the urban social malaise inhabiting the area of the station. I remained speechless for a while, looking startled at the young white male guard, amazed by my inability to respond quickly to such 'reasonable' questions. As it turned out, I found myself being intolerant towards people drinking alcohol in *Olohuone*.

When one homeless elderly man came to *Olohuone* and sat on the sofa next to other people, I sensed an instant discomfort. The source was none other than the odour of someone very dirty with a sharp smell of ammonia. The homeless man asked for permission to sit next to a foreign young man on the sofa. Despite the smell, I decided that it wasn't any of my business to interfere or call on the guards. I thought that the situation was under public control and left the decision for possible action to the rest of the strangers sharing *Olohuone*, if they felt terribly bothered. I left the scene with the elderly and younger men chatting.

It is evident by now that an installation open to the public right in the centre of Helsinki and the Railway Station created a dynamic in the space that, for one thing, was incompatible with the transportation function of the station, that, secondly, it was unsettling for me as

a researcher of urban public space, and that finally proved most of my fears and prejudice ungrounded. The dynamic of *Olohuone* consisted of different kinds of peoples in proximity, reposing, reading or just looking at the passers by. Most of the times exchange may have occurred in unsuspected ways, or it may have not occurred. There were, however, certainly occasions when exchange took place. I witnessed one occasion where a small group of young men called for the assistance of the guards, to get rid of someone who had intruded the 'private space' of their discussion. As I have discussed, the partial success of *Olohuone* was that different people got the chance to use the space of the station differently than its inscribed norms. The station program got a week of disturbance, where some people were forced to encounter situations and people they would normally avoid, and some had to make up their minds, take sides: enjoy the situation or avoid it altogether.

Displacements

> "The parochialization of public space, appropriation by or for certain groups, is seen as one of the most important causes of the decline of public space as meeting place (e.g. Gadet 1999). […] Perhaps it is not parochialization that hinders the development of public domain, but in fact an overwrought idea of the public space as a neutral meeting place for all social groups regardless of class, ethnicity or lifestyle."
> (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.85)

Was *Olohuone* a parochial installation, was it dominated by a relatively homogeneous group? Were there instances within which certain groups were "entering the parochial domains of 'others'"[338], or was it a neutral place for people to just meet regardless of their differences? Answering these questions on the nature of the installation requires further discussion on its presence in and influence on, its context. While Hajer & Reijndorp speak of a positive parochialisation of space, one that doesn't exclude but rather allows the 'Other' to enter, I have been working with a concept that suits my position better.

In his exposition of identity, Deleuze (French 1968, English trans. 1994) discusses the concepts of difference and repetition, the second of which he associated with displacement. From Deleuze's elaborate and philosophical discourse I singled out two points about displacement and invented an analogy that makes sense to me. If we consider the every day norms of the West Hall of the Helsinki Railway Station as a situation in a present time (series he calls it) and *Olohuone* as a hybrid environment (virtual object he calls it) consisting of objects extracted from a past time and displaced to the West Hall, then, according to my analogy, the questions and discussions caused by this displacement can only cause the present situation

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[338] Hajer & Reijndorp (2001, p.88).

to develop. Here the essential element is that displacement causes questions and develops a present situation; a development that may be a fundamentally positive and awakening shift of perspective.

> "The 'never-seen' which characterizes an always displaced and disguised object is immersed in the 'already-seen' of the pure past in general, from which that object is extracted. We do not know when or where we have seen it, in accordance with the objective nature of the problematic; and ultimately, it is only the strange which is familiar and only different which is repeated." (Deleuze 1994, p.109)

The point I take from this passage is the strange familiarity to something extracted from a past time. Then one mustn't forget the Derridian displacement; a concept that as Mark Krupnick (1983, p.1) tells us, Derrida hasn't articulated theoretically, despite its centrality in his de-centering mode of critique. The connection between displacement and Derrida's deconstruction is not as relevant to me as Krupnick claims the concept should do:

> "Deconstruction as he [Derrida] practices it allies itself with the voiceless, the marginal, the repressed, but it has no conviction that the old, bad (metaphysical) order can be transcended. The word is déplacement not dépassement. We may move things about, but we are not flattered into conceiving that we may 'pass beyond.'" (Krupnick 1983, p.2)

What I find relevant, even at a strictly inspirational and conceptual level, is this idea of challenge and an almost polemic desire for transformation that Krupnick claims displacement is for Derrida. In this sense, displacement is not only a conceptual tool but can also be an organisational mode.

The aim of briefly referring to Deleuze and Derrida is to give at least two possibilities for readings on a concept that has been meaningful to me. Displacement I claim characterised *Olohuone*, providing a platform for representation of different peoples within the larger, relatively homogeneous group based on 'white' dominance. I am talking here about a public culture that I claim does exist in the relatively homogeneous Finland, and one that doesn't allow certain groups much room for intervening in the processes of representation; what I have been calling 'public face.' De Certeau (1988) refers to displacement as a process often practiced when walking or moving in the city. Thinking in terms of the parochialisation of space seems to me to suggest a strict program and I wanted to avoid that. Displacement as I define it is a more flexible concept, allowing a situation to happen 'out of place' and 'out of context.' The fact itself of such an occurrence will normally make people think and react. If in addition the situation invites in and is open for participation, then the ways people embrace such a situation will be indicative of its strengths. Displacement, then, would

become a connecting concept for the people, a common source of diverse meanings and possibilities, and not necessarily a source of alienation.

> "Alfred Kazin writes of Forster's hope in Howards End that 'a grievously class-proud, call-protecting, class-embittered society may yet come to think of some deeper, more ancient 'comradeship' as one of its distinguishing marks.' In both Maurice and Howards End Forster wants to show that by breaking through sexual and class boundaries. But in Howards End he also reflects on a possible modern meaning of place. His sense of place is not that of a sanctuary; instead, it is a scene in which people come alive, where they expose, acknowledge, and address the discordant parts of themselves and one another." (Sennett 2002, p.354)

Different people with a variety of affiliations might find themselves sharing a displacement, and sharing even a common interest in this displacement, although they may experience it differently from one another. *Olohuone* was a symbolic representation of a hybrid living room, whereas Sennett (2002, p.353) writes: "Human displacements ought to jolt people into caring about one another, and where they are." It was filled with the 2nd hand artefacts of a domestic environment.

First displacement: a living room at the West Hall of Helsinki Railway Station. The installation was not put in a glass showcase, it was not meant to be a spectacle. Second displacement: many thought of *Olohuone* as an art installation/projects, though it was open to the use and probable misuse of strangers. Within the installation sweet pastries and 'tsikoudia' (Cretan local spirits) were offered as a treat to the guests on the first days, audio material was played from real people's living rooms, in addition to Mozart, Haydn and Somali music. Somali and Greek incenses were burned to alter the ambiance of that particular part of the station. These premeditated gestures had as an objective to help people transcend from the station context into another sphere of four-dimensional space (time being the forth dimension), in a domain that was both public and private. An illusion, you may say, but it wasn't an obligatory one. This I consider the third displacement. A final one is due to the fact that at *Olohuone* people weren't treated as consumers. Instead, a water dispenser was there to ease peoples' thirst, six boxes of books were placed on a book case, on the floor and table, for people to read and finally to take away for free. People were offered a situation and were really asked for nothing in return but 'to be.' On the other hand, they were participating in an experiment that I had set up; *Olohuone* was organized for the people who use the space of the station in various ways.

I am trying to sketch a series of displacements that I can think which may have put people – either as spectators or as participants of *Olohuone* – in an uncomfortably comfortable position. This may sound contradictory, yet, it describes the situation of exposing oneself in the private sphere of public space. The people themselves were not invited, as such; there

was no specific user profile for *Olohuone*. Every single person finding her- or him-self at that part of the station could use it. This simple fact leads me to the most important displacement of all; strangers who would never anticipate to sharing time together in their living rooms found themselves sitting next to each other, and not only that but also shared an experience, looking at one another. As I said before, people who would most probably avoid each other found themselves at the same place. Parochialisation makes sense to me when discussing Frazer's (1991) subaltern counter publics and the truth of her concept. Despite my appreciation, though, I believe that in the design and production of public spaces one should be extra cautious not to resort to thematisation, monofunctionalism and segregation. In the case of *Olohuone*, my aim was to orchestrate displacement so as to cause a shift of perspective. Anchoring displacement in the spatial configuration of *Olohuone* seems banal; to some of the people who participated though, it seemed extraordinary.

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 22.09.05, 19:46. Out of all those bugs there came gifts.

Shift of Perspective

> "The core of successful public space thus lies not so much in the shared use of space with others, let alone in the 'meeting', but rather in the opportunities that urban proximity offers for a 'shift' of perspective: through the experience of otherness one's own casual view of reality gets some competition from other views and lifestyles. That shift of perspective, however, is not always a pleasant experience." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.89)

Different people found themselves sharing the same place. Perhaps this is not so inconsequential as Reijndorp and Hajer suggest, since this occurrence created the conditions for proximity and for a 'shift' of perspective. Walking in and through a public space, the opportunity may occur for a shift of perspective. This, though, is hindered by daily routines, stress, flux, and therefore, as Don Mitchell might have agreed, by our individual bubbles.

> "[…] could it be that we are beginning to see the development of a legal regime that takes personal sovereignty as a state of legal isolation from all that one does not wish to encounter? It is not hard to imagine a world in which individuals are legally granted a "sovereign space" that moves with them through the city, keeping beggars, leafleters, and strangers at bay." (Mitchell 2003a, p.194, note: 28)

The bombardment of information around us, the cultivated fear of the urban malaise, the 'stranger', as well as being bubbled, all these and more minimize the possibilities for a shift of perspective.

> "I think ethnicity-a cultural strategy for producing difference-is another [informal etiquette for survival among city dwellers], and it survives on the politics of fear by requiring people to keep their distance from certain aesthetic markers. These markers vary over time. Pants may be baggy or pegged, heads may be shaggy or shaved. Like fear itself, ethnicity becomes an aesthetic category." (Zukin 1995, p.41-42)

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 23.09.05, 20:27. Drawing by Tähkä.

It is worthwhile trying to break that etiquette, even temporarily. A displacement, taking place at the level of rhythms, brings in a possibility for creating the conditions for such a shift and exchange to take place. In other words, creating the conditions for slowing down within a place of flux and rush, or creating a calmer tempo within an island-like territory in a sea of constant movement, provides people with a place to repose, and perhaps to reflect. Some of the people who joined *Olohuone* admittedly took the chance to contemplate the situation they were in. It might be that certain displacements orchestrated in public space create the conditions for proximity, exchange and a shift of perspective to occur.

5.4 THE STATION AS A SPACE FOR CONTESTATION

> "Brinckerhoff Jackson (1957) has shown that railway station environments are inherently a stacking of different spheres and diverse users. However, station design is mostly employed to actualize a spectrum of uses. The question is whether this is the only conceivable escape from the perceived problems of manageability. Would another programme of requirements not offer the designer the chance to better deal with that inherent layeredness of station environments?"
> (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.81)

The Helsinki Railway Station, like most transportation hubs, is considered in principal as monofunctional. The authorities manage the station this way in order to support the basic function of transportation along with the underlying consumption, and eliminate possibilities for other undesirable, messy, disorderly, and hard-to-control uses. The social function of the station has been largely pushed aside, for it is much too complicated to deal with. On the other hand the social aspects of the station create a pressing need to deal with them, though not only through strict policing.

The issue I want to point out is that the petty thefts, assaults, robberies and harassment taking place in and around the station are manifestations of deeper social problems of discrimination, injustice, limited access to legal and justly paid employment. They are also indicative of inequalities that increase in a weakening welfare system. Multi-layeredness and debate, possibilities for open discourse and cultural exchange, and acceptance of diversity, may provide a much more fertile ground for negotiating social issues. And if we agree that public space plays an important role as a domain where we encounter various diversities and challenge our beliefs and/or prejudices, then this space needs to be thought of as part of a discourse different from suppression and control of the masses. The task for policy makers, designers, architects and planners, managers and police seems bigger than life. It requires such a shift of perspective that we can only attempt small improving steps on the avenue of reciprocal respect. Tolerance is no longer the magic word. Respect is what is required.

In *Olohuone* a homeless person, dirty and smelly, could in the late night hours rest next to a 'decent' propertied urbanite, and share the same 'living room,' even for a short while; this kind of proximity, if cultivated, may indeed break taboos such as that the homeless are less valuable people. When some Finnish 'Goth' youngsters showed up at the opening of *Olohuone*, I felt my anxiety rising sky high out of fear of 'them.' I had to face my fear and welcome them as I was welcoming all the other people. I observed them and they observed me. Gradually I calmed down. The next time some of the same group of people showed up, I was much more relaxed. We couldn't really be friendly to each other; when I tried to break the ice, our communication was difficult and I wasn't persistent, thinking that I didn't want to intimidate them (as much as I got intimidated by them at first). In fact, a young Finnish

woman told me once that when talking to some of these youngsters about how surprising it was that *Olohuone* hadn't been destroyed or vandalized, she got the answer that it was a nice place and since they liked it they, for their part, wouldn't like to cause any damage.

This said, I have to mention the 2006 vandalizing of the glass panels of KIASMA, the museum of contemporary art right in the centre of Helsinki, opposite the new parliament extension building. KIASMA must be heavily supervised and still some people found it easy to break glass panels at one of KIASMA's 'weak' points. Despite the cameras and guards, vandalism can always occur in the most unexpected ways. We can then either create bunkers against property crimes, or 'read' the vandalism. This is a very controversial perspective, and not many would consider 'vandalism' a legitimate form of radical activism or protest. I, too, would hate having my property burned in a Paris suburb, or any place in fact, as a sign of protest; however, social suppression bears consequences and violence can be one of them.

This whole discussion aims at accentuating the importance of public space as a space of contestation and negotiation between different groups, a space designed and managed to allow the possibility for exchange, proximity and the overlapping of different spheres; a threefold which is very similar to Zukin's three defining characteristics of functioning urban public space: "proximity, diversity, and accessibility" (1995, p.262).

A station like the one in the centre of Helsinki has the potential to become such a space, as it has the inherent characteristic of multi-layredness despite its monofunctionality. This is not merely a designers' task, but it does require us to take a stand and push for socio-spatial reform. Instead of using the station as an exhibition hall maybe we could design the means to realize other social functions too, and create conditions for different people to take some time and look in each other's eyes and not just brush their shoulders.[339] I am not certain if this kind of encounter took place at *Olohuone*, what I know is that as far as I observed and from some peoples' testimony there was no violent incident, even when the security guards interfered and escorted a drunken man or a sleeping homeless person outside. Having said that, I don't claim that violent incidents couldn't have occurred at *Olohuone*, only that they didn't, despite my persistent anxiety in expecting them to occur at any moment.

Public & Private

> "We define 'public domain' as those places where an exchange between different social groups is possible and also actually occurs. […] Public space is in essence a space that

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[339] An optimistic view about small public spaces is provided by W. H. Whyte. "I am, in sum, bespeaking busy places. Too busy? Too crowded? I think not. As we have seen, people have a nice sense of the number that is right for a place, and it is they who determine how many is too many. They do not, furthermore, seek to get away from it all. If they did, they would go to the lonely empty places where there are few people. But they do not. They go to the lively places where there are many people. And they go there by choice – not to escape the city, but to partake of it." (Whyte 1980, p.100)

is freely accessible for everyone: public is the opposite of private. That is not to say that every public space is a public domain. Public domain entails additional requirements. We are interested in the question of which spaces are positively valued as places of shared experience by people from different backgrounds or with dissimilar interests. In principle, such places can also be found beyond the traditional urban space of streets, parks and squares. They can even be spaces that are not public in the strict sense, for example privately managed collective spaces that still function as public domain." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.11)

Most of the feminist theorists are rightfully uncomfortable with the dichotomy concerning public and private spaces. Massey, concerning Western dualistic thinking, writes:

"[…] it has been contended that this kind of dichotomous thinking, together with a whole range of the sets of dualisms which take this form […] are related to the construction of the radical distinction between genders in our society, to the characteristics assigned to each of them, and to the power relations maintained between them." (Massey 1994, p.256)

It is my belief that the dichotomy, proposed by Hajer and Reijndorp, is not doing much different, but reproduces socio-spatial models by setting the agenda, designing, materializing and managing space in general. Zukin (1995) has shown how private and public spaces are a malleable continuum within which public opinion may, for instance, define a private space as public, or defy designers and administrator's intentions. While Goheen writes:

"Urban geographers have begun to recognize that concepts of public and private held by the urban citizenry are malleable, responding to changing experience and perception." (Goheen 1998, p.490)

Therefore, my objection against given dichotomies like that between private and public space, is not due to a, strictly speaking, relativistic negation of any dichotomy as axiomatic. It is due to a serious and long-run limitation of exploring possibilities of space formation. These possibilities may very well be rooted in the everyday spatial experiences of people and the meanings they, we, assign to spaces and their attributes. De Certeau has shown the importance of everyday experience, and how unreadable everyday practices, spatially exercised, can become regulating forces for the wider society. He writes:

"[…] one can analyse the microbe–like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay; one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being

regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, developed and insinuated themselves into the networks of surveillance, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization." (De Certeau 1988, p.96)

"In his [Manuel de Solá-Morales] view, the urbanist's task cannot be limited to the design of the public spaces, but must be broadened to include the integration of public spaces and those indistinct privatized spaces into a system of urban collective spaces. As an antidote to the fear for the privatization of the public domain he presents the possibility of urbanizing private domains, or the integration of the private sphere of the public." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.48)

Living in Finland has been enlightening concerning the social status of public spaces and services. In such welfare states, buildings, housing, and such public services as libraries, schools, and day care centres are considered public spaces, and are indicators of the welfare, all along shaping Finnish citizenship.[340] The station, seen from this perspective, is a public space full-stop. What I claim is that, in addition, the station has many peculiarities of an indistinct public character.

The perspective of de Solá-Morales is very relevant to my aspirations for *Olohuone*. This was an experiment to explore the possibilities, public reactions and interactions caused by a privatisation of the station's West Hall exactly as de Solá-Morales characterizes some private spaces. The term indistinct public space applied to the station is justifiable given the ambivalence within which people, as stakeholders, have to live. Ambivalence is a condition that the authorities may find handy to sustain. There are regulations governing the use of the Railway Station building, like the public order act, which is in full force but which remains quite vague.[341] When I asked a director of security at the station to provide me the text of the regulations, he ignored me despite the support I had from the station management. The problem isn't only the text of the regulations or their pretext, but also their consequences; how the young guards interpret the regulations and how they work with stereotypes when enforcing them on stake holders like homeless, poor, drunk, dark, 'underground,' marginal persons, and so on.

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[340] Eräsaari (1999) demonstrates that the construction of the Finnish welfare system went, and probably still goes, hand in hand with the extensive construction of public buildings in Finland.
"While the historians and sociologists talk about Finns being 'state dependent', one could see the number of public buildings as the symbolic and materialistic proof of this

dependency." (Eräsaari 1999.p.26)
Eräsaari shows how Finnish authorities, through public building, promoted certain models of socialisation as well as aesthetisation to the people.

[341] See www.intermin.fi/intermin/hankkeet/jarjestyslaki/home.nsf/pages/indexeng

"The policing of function is a way of determining what kind of public is present. And those who fit security guards' stereotypes of nonconsumers or troublemakers (like black and Latino teenagers and elderly women of all races) are made to feel distinctly unwelcome." (Bickford 2000, p.361)

The recognition of the station as an indistinct public space co-inspired my idea of bringing the symbolic representation of a domestic environment inside the station's West Hall. This stemmed mainly from my search for a displacement caused by domesticating a public space. The domestication I aspired to in *Olohuone* didn't relate to the domestication by cappuccino that Zukin (1995) thoughtfully presents in writing about the redesign of Bryant Park in New York.[342] At *Olohuone*, domestication has been symbolic and anti-commercial.

"The restoration of Bryant Park: Domestication by cappuccino." (Zukin 1995, p.xiv)

"The Bryant Park Restoration Corporation intended their work to set a prototype for urban public space. They completely reorganized the landscape design of the park, opening it up to women, who tended to avoid the park even during daylight (see Cranz 1982), and selling certain kinds of buffet food. They established a model of pacification by cappuccino." (Zukin 1995, p.28)

Athens, 2003. Psiris area café. Cappuccino and good company.

There would be no, and there wasn't any, real privacy at *Olohuone*; people using it were in public view and scrutiny, they became part of the installation and were exposed in the ways being in public implies. What was new here was the alibi that was provided to people to pretend that they were in the warm embrace of the private sphere of this public space. This is indeed how *Olohuone* worked; as an urbanized private domain that suggested a collectivity that was lived amongst those who used the facilities of *Olohuone* as well as those who were only standing 'outside' of it and decided not to join. This collectiveness of *Olohuone* was not programmed, instead it was only hoped for and facilitated, it was allowed, and, as it turned out, it was quite rewarding for at least some of the people who participated.

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342 Whyte (1980) considers as the main reason that Bryant Park in NYC had become dangerous ground, the fact that it was a kind of blind spot.
"Bryant Park is cut off from the street by walls, fences, and shrubbery. You can't see in. You can't see out. There are only a few entry points. This park will be used by people when it is opened up to them." (Whyte 1980, p.58)

5.5 DESIGNERS' ROLE(S)

Designers, architects and planners, along with most people, share one rather concise idea about "the public": there are those who are very much like us and many more who are not like us; those whom we consider like us we think of as our kind of people, while those whom we consider unlike us we avoid. The group of 'our kind of people' shrinks considerably, given the fact that we are trained to be extra cautious in public. "Public" is probably not my friends or me, public is the rest, the ones I don't know, the strangers, the potentially dangerous. Here of course lies an irony: I am likely to be considered potentially dangerous to some other people, for whom I am part of the public. Training experts of space to put their trust and respect in an unknown public sounds absurd; especially in this era of terrorist-phobia, and given the carefully knit web of women's fears of being in public. On the other hand, to design and plan in the name of a public that, since we don't know it, we imagine to be somewhat like us, or like an 'average' in a sea of 'homogenized difference,' is also absurd. Closed in my bubble, cosy and comfortable, I may let my imagination free about how a station should be, very much like a bigger bubble that will be comfortable and cosy for the average public.

Is it possible that we design and build bubbles for our imaginary clones and regarding public space we always rely on policing to combat the other who might want to appropriate our bubble? As Don Mitchell[343] has presented, and I agree, nowadays moving in public is exactly like moving in a bubble, protecting our privacy while being in public. It's not a universal human need that causes this, it is due to a socio-spatial engineering to support the economy and provide friction-free zones for consumption. Disregarding consumers political self, spatial experts contribute to capital's machinations to increase profit by formulating public space as frictionless, and ordered to be 'pretty.' With declining electoral participation in Finnish parliamentary elections[344] and similar trends observed in other European countries, authorities might soon want to reconsider policies producing homogeneity, silent consensus and citizens' passivity. There may then even be a need for public spaces that would 'house' political discourse. Because of the state's interventionism, public space and its design would seem to be in a consequential relation to social change. I would rather see a more reciprocal action, and for spatial issues to be debated when social issues are debated, in a similar spirit as the political project of radical social and political change that inspired Lefebvre; however, in a more anthropocentric sense. Indeed, Urwin (2000, p.24) has criticised Lefebvre for dehumanizing space and not taking "[…] seriously the role that human agency has in shaping its own future." By making claims and desiring, I would add.

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343 Mitchell (2003a, p.44, 46, 194 note: 28).

344 "The voting percentage of citizens resident in Finland was 67.9, which is 1.8 percentage points lower than in 2003. Participation in elections has remained weak for a long time. Since 1979 the voting percentages have gone down steadily from election to election, but this time the voting percentage was lower than ever before after the 1945 elections." Extract from http://www.stat.fi/til/evaa/2007/evaa_2007_2007-03-22_tie_002_en.html (Accessed: 22 April 2007).

"Public space in the modern city is charged with meaning and with controversy. The space in question is that which the public collectively values-space to which it attributes symbolic significance and asserts claims. The values attaching to public space are those with which the generality of the citizenry endows it. Citizens create meaningful public space by expressing their attitudes, asserting their claims and using it for their own purposes. It thereby becomes a meaningful public resource. The process is a dynamic one, for meanings and uses are always liable to change. Renegotiation of understandings is ongoing; contention accompanies the process." (Goheen 1998, p.479)

The citizens' claims Goheen speaks of are a sheer danger for authorities, from the station management to police and security guards. This is why a space like the Helsinki Railway Station is bound to sustain a dual character of a public service and a privately managed shopping mall. The juggling between the two is clearly a matter of political decisions and socio-spatial policies creating cultural meanings. The monocultural meaning of uniformity and homogeneity nurtures the passivity of citizens who move in and through the station, in a protected, friction-free environment; after all, passivity discourages claims.[345] At the station, social issues are seen as problems and any social discourse can potentially give rise to "heated" debate, it can even create claims, and contestation; all too undesirable for a place that must remain uncomplicated "as a transportation hub."

If, as Hajer & Reijndorp (2001, p.89) suggest "[…] public domain always presupposes the possibility of breaking through certain codes," then I believe the designer's role and creative contribution could be to provide the ground for such a "breaking" to occur. With *Olohuone* I aimed at such a breaking. The consequences of such a breaking, I agree with Hajer and Reijndorp, are not always pleasant. This leads us to the discussion about conflict and our inherent fear of it. Conflict management is something that most experts of public space would rather not even have to think about. The common, preventive design and managerial policies

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[345] Insinuating that there is no dissent or debate in Finnish society is naïve, for life in Finland shows otherwise. Still, the politics of inclusion remain biased and so, to push the argument further, challenging silent consensus is important. At the end of the 90s, Finnish people, apparently annoyed by certain decisions influencing the city space, engaged in a public debate. KIASMA, the museum of modern art in Helsinki, stirred up such a debate.
"It is possible that the public debate is a symptom of a decreasing democratic influence by the people in matters concerning their environment. At the same time cities are growing larger and denser, so there is greater need to accommodate the different views and interests. In Finland the public life, administration, or public organizations have not been very inclined to dialogue or discussion, so the situation is a new and baffling one to all parties concerned." (Eräsaari 1999, p.33)

For examples in English language over the debate on spatial issues in Finland, I recommend Panu Lehtovuori (2005).

[346] "If good places are so felicitous, why are there not more of them? The biggest single reason is the problem of 'undesirables.' They are not themselves much of a problem. It is the measures taken to combat them that is the problem. Many businessmen have an almost obsessive fear that if a place is attractive to people it might be attractive to undesirable people. So it is made unattractive. There is to be no loitering – what a Calvinistic sermon is in those words! – no eating, no sitting. So it is that benches are made too short to sleep on, that spikes are put in ledges; most important, many needed spaces are not provided at all, or the plans for them scuttled." (Whyte 1980, p.60)

involve internal walls and impermeable borders, as Sennett (1991, p.196, 201) has pointed out, as well as policing and neutralisation of space; the later being easily reached, as we saw in the station, by monofunctionalism and commercialisation.[346]

Animation

> "The aim was [in the mid 60s] not only the revitalization of the urban space, but also the promotion of the active involvement of large sections of the population in the urban culture, and the creation of new opportunities for personal development: […] The core thinking was that the public space of the cities had to be animated. 'Animation policy' was developed to this end and special 'animators' were appointed." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.76)

Helsinki Railway Station, 70s. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Museum (collections), Hyvinkää

Maybe I have been too reserved concerning the inventiveness architects, planners and designers are called on to demonstrate in facing the demand for public spaces in times of an Augéan super modernity. Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) advocate events as means to establish public spaces potentially functioning as public domain. Lehtovuori (2005, p.169) makes an attempt to briefly list some "potential new instantiations of public urban space" when and where 'something' can act as a temporary puller and binder of a certain community. Lehtovuori is

also optimistic in regard to public space, and he is in accord with the last few decades' rheto-ric that new urban phenomena need new ways to deal with them; like "new eyes" (Chora 2001p.74, cited in Lehtovuori 2005, p.159), or to "relearn to think about space" (Augé 1995, p.36). Lehtovuori names as "spatio-temporal islands" public spaces where

> "Conflicts and their (temporarily used) arenas may become 'islands' of public space in the general 'spacelessness.' This means that 'outsiders' can recognize a specific atmosphere, and are attracted to it." (Lehtrovuori 2005, p.164)

Helsinki Railway Station, summer 1964. Platform hostesses. Courtesy of the Finnish Railway Station (collections), Hyvinkää.

Further on he writes:

> "As in temporary uses, time, the process of change and events play an important role. It appears that one way to challenge the Concept City of 'strong' urban plan-ning is to take seriously the process of production of actual space, a partly unpre-dictable, multidimensional situation of interaction unravelling in time, lived reality. Open planning is achieved only by leaving things truly open, for users." (Lehtovuori 2005, p.167)

The ideas I want to keep in mind are, "the event" and "open planning." I see an event as an animation that requires planning and negotiations, and open planning as a creative and liberalizing procedure in which planners are waving the white flag to people, offering the products of their labour. "Open planning" doesn't mean "truly open for users," because

this is a disguise, a jargon-like negotiation of planners' 'positionality.' Simply put, events require a varied degree of planning, therefore a certain desire for manipulation of the public, while open planning would tend to involve the public in the planning itself, not only in the end-results.

Was *Olohuone* an event? The answer could be a positive one. I certainly would prefer it to be a "spatio-temporal island," being more consistent with the idea of certain people gathering in groups to socialize in a sea of flux, right in Helsinki Railway Station.

While planning *Olohuone*, I couldn't help but wonder if people, passers by mostly, would be intrigued to join the installation. I worryied that it might look more like an art piece to be looked at, and less like an interactive work. Animation seemed like a safe way to create an 'event-like' atmosphere. After negotiations and consulting, a friend and colleague experienced in performative media decided to assist. Helena Oikarinen-Jabai dressed in white, like a space doctor and futurologist, interacted with some people who had already joined *Olohuone*. People were freely and uninhibitedly walking around the 'marking ropes' of *Olohuone* and were sitting on the sofas and in the armchairs. There was no need for invitations after all. There was no need for a performance either, or a drama, as we also thought of enacting the essence of *Olohuone* as a private place in public.

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 22.09.05, 12:50.

Animation to support a new urban situation, as I understand it after my experience with *Olohuone*, is part and parcel of a process to program and give guidelines, to manipulate a situation and behaviour, and of course to supervise and control an event. Animation

may have been born as a policy to combat urban boredom, as well as to make urban space livelier, however in certain settings it is part of regulating feel-good and safe environments for consumption, with programmed entertainment and maybe a bit of interaction.[347] On other occasions, animators transcend a place into other levels, breathing in life and providing spectators or participants with inspiration for awareness as well as entertainment. Animation in public space is a strong practice often adopted to revitalize an area, to amuse the public at the centre of a city. In their majority, animation policies of cities can be quite creative, however they cannot be spontaneous. Spontaneity is not a virtue of policy-tailored animation, therefore any performance, no matter how excellent, rarely has the effect of an unexpected gathering/protest, or of a person standing on a box debating aloud. In fact, public debate in the urban public space of Helsinki seems to me much more unlikely to take place than inebriation or public urination.

Barcelona, 2003. La Rambla.

Staging Spontaneity

"Public domain then supposes that the exchange and commingling of those diffe-rent worlds and their liminal spaces will become the design task. It also assumes the

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347 On the other hand, Whyte (1980, p. 94) has a different opinion with his "triangulation." He thinks that in order to enable people to encounter each other in public spaces, animators, "street characters" or stimuli of some kind could do the trick.
"I am not, heaven forfend, going on to argue for places of maximum gregariousness, social directors for plazas.

Anomie would be preferable. What I'm suggesting, simply, is that we make plces friendlier. We know how. In both design and management of spaces, there are many ways to make it much easier for people to mingle and meet." (Whyte 1980, p.98)

existence of places where this is possible: despite the diversity of the public, the high streets may be key shopping areas but are almost meaningless as public domain. We have shown that the coupling of relative freedom and technical provocation does indeed imbue the Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam with these qualities. That is the crux of the design task. That is the reason we have mentioned […] also a number of instruments: a thematic approach in a new sense, framing, compressing, coupling and connecting. [also fencing, metal detectors][…]. This is expressly intended as a challenge to architects, urban planners, policy-makers and cultural entrepreneurs." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 135)

"We are referring to Sharon Zukin. Who thinks that the trick is to 'frame encounters that are both intimate and intrusive.'" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.117)

Zukin's suggestion for functioning public space and its interpretation by Hajer and Reijndorp is a conceptual tool with practical implications in different socio-spatial interventions. Zukin speaks of the power of representation in cities:

"Historically, power over a space (or over a body or a social group) determines the ability to impose a vision of that space. Many of Michel Foucault's historical speculations reverse that relation-and it is that standpoint that I have adopted here. Often the power to impose a coherent vision of a space enables a group to claim that space. This is a framing process." (Zukin 1995, p. 279)

She sees framing as empowering for certain groups of people who otherwise don't have much say in deciding the city's image, or visual representations in the city.

"By giving distinctive cultural groups access to the same public space, they incorporate separate visual images and cultural practices into the same public cultures." (Zukin 1995, p.21-22)

Framing leads to the multi-layeredness of public space and that accords with Hajer and Reijndorp's ideas about places that are dominated by a group but allow others to negotiate claims, or, in Zukin's terms perhaps, identity representations. Therefore, Zukin deals with public culture and public spaces and uses framing as a concept for democratizing culture.

"[…] incorporating new images into visual representations of the city can be democratic. It can integrate rather than segregate social and ethnic groups, and it can also help negotiate new group identities." (Zukin 1995, p.20)

Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) use the concept of framing to develop one strategic tool for public space functioning as a public domain. An encounter is an unexpected meeting or even a confrontation. Intimate and intrusive encounter might be an encounter that has an informal, friendly atmosphere, somewhat personal and private, and additionally it has the ambiguity of a tensed, unwelcoming, and uninvited occasion. Zukin seems to think that such encounters can be framed in settings, which thus function as democratic public spaces. Framing an encounter is an interesting suggestion, since it implies a fundamentally responsive and instigative approach towards making place out of space. It implies a formulation, not necessarily a construction, and maybe even false evidence concerning a situation that may be deceiving. This literal reading of Zukin's thought reveals the core of Hajer and Reijndorp's concept of creating places that are meaningful to certain groups that allow others to access them and even negotiate claims over them.

My conclusion is that the interconnections between these places – within which exchange and a shift of perspective may occur – are tasks for experts. The aspect of connection is important especially for socio-spatial policy-making. Imagine places like the ones anticipated above mushrooming independently in the city; the result, as appealing as it may be for some, would lack a certain coherence and a broader perspective. No city planning office would approve such an uncontrollable situation. Then again, for interconnectedness to occur between such places would require coordination between different authorities and a bureaucratic control that could make this kind of guerrilla-like place quite impossible. This kind of place is relevant to our discussion as long as it is unexpected (just like Zukin's encounters), and it

Helsinki, Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 27.09.05, 21:04.

has a temporal element inherent in it. Otherwise, there is the risk of such places becoming routine, unappreciated, or even normalized or institutionalized. *Olohuone* stood at Helsinki Railway Station for eight days, a few people said that such a place should always be there, but despite its success I still haven't been convinced.

Fences

> "The fences are in essence symbolic orderings: they demarcate particular spheres, without harsh isolation or exclusion. […] Fences have long been a feature of parks. Perhaps they from a somewhat too literal translation of the concept of 'framing', but in fact they are often only symbolic demarcation. […] Moreover, a fence marks a place. […] The symbolic significance of fences often sits uncomfortably with the principles of 'fluid space', openness, neutrality and collectivity found in modern urbanism. […] The concept of 'fences for public accessibility' demonstrates an alternative design strategy for the development of public domain. The well-designed compression and connection promote public access and exchange, but no one can expect a total solution from such design principles. Design strategies such as these call for 'supportive policy': safety guarantees are fundamentally important." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.121)

Rotterdam, 1997. Public park.

John Brinkerhoff Jackson has influenced Hajer & Reijndorp. In his 1996 essay, "Places for Fun and Games," he writes in favour of fencing in playgrounds in the US.[348] His reasoning is very similar to that of Hajer & Reijndorp regarding their "fences for public accessibility." "Fences for public accessibility" is not, and I am afraid will never be, my favourite concept for development of the public domain. Symbolic demarcation or not, the fact remains that I have an aversion towards anything that suggests a divide. Amongst all the social divides that are also reasons for discrimination, there are the spatial ones. The spatial divisions are of at least two kinds, those that are obvious and those that are subtle. The latter are socio-spatial divisions that are often not even materialised but they might as well have been. I am not referring to walls, fences, electric wires, surveillance cameras, or guards. I am talking about

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[348] B.J. Jackson (1997, p.2-3).

New York, 2005.

socio-spatial practices that enable social injustices. How can one talk about inclusive spaces and use practices of separation? I don't know exactly how, but I did. It certainly has to do with my discomfort in regard to the whole anti- and pro-segregation policies, especially as I experience them in Finland. On the one hand, anti-segregation policies mix different social realms, different incomes, owners and tenants, Finns and refugees or immigrants, 'normal' people and people with problems acknowledged by the social services, single person and family households, and so on.

On the other hand, the Finnish network and welfare society, balancing between economic competence and social justice, has evidently allowed segregations to occur; socio-spatial segregations, like the common knowledge divide between western and eastern Helsinki. Rental prices, real estate values, socio-cultural contexts and social amenities, all influence decision-making on the question of where one wants to live and can live, rather than allowing the question to be simply one of where one is "programmed" to live. Due to the anti-segregation policies, as well as to social consensus and compromise, the voices of difference remain sporadic and weak, within a society that still considers itself very homogeneous. The public faces of various groups of people inhabiting Helsinki have been and remain invisible.

I am very much surprised to realize through *Olohuone* that I quite easily employed 'fencing' in the way Hajer and Reijndorp suggest. From the first day of building the installation I requested from the station management a rope to put around *Olohuone*. First, it was so that passers-by wouldn't disturb me while I was still building the installation, as they eventually did. However, when I had opened the installation for the public, I realized that the rope could indeed work as a symbolic demarcation of the territory of *Olohuone*. It wasn't a hard barrier, anyway, since young people often jumped over it, despite the fact that I had left a substantial opening for people to 'enter' *Olohuone*.

The rope provided a safe zone around the installation and a symbolic territorial marker, as well as a device for making people in *Olohuone* feel that they were in a transcendent environment neither public nor private. In addition, the rope provided me with a distressing solution to my fear of vandalism directed at *Olohuone*; something for which I was trying to prepare myself, considering it a possible result of such an urban experiment. In retrospect I am not sure if more people would have joined *Olohuone* if I hadn't put any demarcating rope, or if indeed it contributed to preserving *Olohuone* as a special demarcated place within the space of the station. What

is evident is that fencing was finally part of *Olohuone*, although not premeditated, and though it didn't admittedly restricted *Olohuone* from its visitors. On the contrary, it seemed to make people's decision to join *Olohuone* more conscious, as the rope created a first hint that this was 'something' out of the ordinary routine of the station and maybe a realisation that although this installation was open for the public it was so under certain 'negotiable' conditions of civility. *Olohuone*-rs, despite their varied social realms, by joining the territory of the installation within the ropes, were guests and hosts participating in the making of *Olohuone* as an experience. As I was told, some people who could have caused damage didn't, since they liked *Olohuone* and wouldn't like something harmful to happen to it. In any case, and as inconsistent as I turned out to be, I am inclined to agree with the point Susan Bickford makes:

> "[…] gates construct and manifest social relations-in this case, segregation. I use segregation intentionally, for it seems to me to capture the relational quality of gates in a way that exclusion does not; these kinds of gates function not just to keep some people out, but to keep people on each side separate from one another - or, to put it paradoxically, to actively construct relations of separation." (Bickford 2000, p.361)

While De Certeau writes:

> "[…] it is the partition of space that structures it. Everything refers in fact to this differentiation which makes possible the isolation and interplay of distinct spaces. From the distinction that separates a subject from its exteriority to the distinctions

Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone* , 27.09.05, 21:05.

Marketplace Code of Behavior

To make your visit as convenient and enjoyable as possible, for yourself and others, please abstain from the following while on the property:

- Use of loud or obscene language or gestures.
- Blocking store fronts, fire exits, stairways or escalators.
- Possession of illegal substances.
- Running, shouting, horseplay, throwing of any type of debris, disorderly or disruptive conduct of any nature.
- Walking indoors without shoes or shirt.
- The playing of radios or musical instruments, not part of an activity approved in advance by the Marketplace Management.
- Any act which could result in physical harm to persons or property.

Smoke Free

New York, 2005. Pier 17, shopping mall.

that localize objects, from […], from the functioning of the urban network to that rural landscape, there is no spatiality that is not organized by the determination of frontiers." (De Certeau 1988, p.123)

Keep an Eye Out

"Closed-circuit TV is primarily used to 'preventively' keep an eye on 'suspect' groups. This often means that external features are taken as an important indicator of potential threats. In reality this can of course just as readily lead to deviant behaviour as discourage it: when 'marginal-group youngsters' have discovered the cat-and-mouse game they can play with the video-registration room, and then there is virtually no way to stop them playing that game!" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.125)

I have many doubts about surveillance employed in public spaces. Many of these doubts are due to Hille Koskela's (1997, 1999, 2000) writings on such issues and on the myth that closed-circuit TV tackles women's anxiety and fear of being in public. On the other hand, the ideas of Hajer and Reijndorp (2001) more or less de-demonize surveillance and control technologies in public space. I can see a point in this line of thought. In order for public space to function as a space for different social realms to overlap, for exchange and a shift of perspective to occur, there must be a guarantee of safety. Conflict may arise; however, the fear of violence is something that alienates people from the public space of a city. Conflict may take many forms, verbal abuse and public embarrassment or loosing face, are all equally effective in keeping diversity under tight control.

How can the possibility of conflict – which is part of the discourse of a functioning public domain as a feasible outcome of overlapping, exchanging, and shifting – and the necessity of assurances for safety in public (safety from what exactly), not negate each other? Reijndorp explained briefly what "controlled un-control" in public space can be.[349] I understand his idea as a conditional public space, with relative and negotiable rights of use; spaces that encourage the proximity of difference, and accommodate a certain social climate with specific architecture. In other words, Reijndorp suggested that since safety is a prerequisite for people to participate in public space we, the experts, should take this into serious consideration. On the other hand, we shouldn't use this need for assurances of safety to hinder the development of the public domain. Where I have seen limits and boundaries resisting constructive publicness – proximity, exchange and a shifting of perspective – he sees opportunities, clues to understanding and tools to work with.

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[349] Lecture by Arnold Reijndorp at the *Public Domain & Fun Scape Conference*. Aalborg, 1 April 2005.

Mitchell (2003a) has shown how in the US anti-homeless policies seriously target certain identities more than uses, and contribute in the de-democratisation of public space. Hajer and Reijndorp suggest that we should be looking at uses and not at identities. This means that the identities of, for instance, marginalised groups shouldn't be as important for us as the ways in which these groups use space.

Concerning the importance for 'place making'of 'public face,' or representation, in public space, Zukin (1995, p.23) convincingly presents how "The visibility of and viability of a city's symbolic economy play an important role in the creation of place." This would lead to thinking in terms of functions, which is potentially very abstract, and on the other hand we would have to deal with people distancing from their cultural values, their identities. Again we could end up dealing with space more as a geometric entity in need of ordering and less as a superposition of social places in need of linking and connecting.

Therefore, I see a contradiction between what Hajer and Reijndorp would like us experts of space to achieve and their suggested ways of achieving it, very similar to the eternal moral question between a worthy goal and using unworthy means to achieve it. Having said the above, *Olohuone* was within the context of a heavily supervised space in the Helsinki Railway Station. A closed-circuit camera was already hanging a few meters above, and beyond the installation guards were patrolling the area, especially after I requested this. The installation was placed at the side of the West Hall that has fewer people walking in and out than the central hall; however the number of people passing-by was enough to create the assumption that in case of emergency people would intervene and assist.

Olohuone -rs felt watched or looked at, and indeed they were, not as much by me or the camera or guards as by the other strangers passing by. If there was a sense of ambivalence concerning the status of *Olohuone* and the behaviours accepted or not, then it is possible to say that there was a sense of controlled uncontrol within which people felt freer than the norm of the station would allow them, while also being socially constrained. Now, in regard to this last observation, I can't help but wonder how the ambience of a place like *Olohuone* would be if the social control were being exercised only by the strangers passing by and there were no closed-circuit camera or guards to intervene? This will have to remain a question.

Trivialisation, Norms & Politics

"It even seems ridiculous looking for deeper significance in designer phenomena like these: they are 'fun', they 'look good'-and that's all. Indeed, the term 'designer', which ten years ago started with a fad for the conspicuous sporting of brand names – Lacoste, 'Yves St-Laurent, Gucci, Fiorucci – extends over such a range of image-

making, from graphics to film, that it seems to mean precisely the opposite of label-
ing: designed, the image is sundered from its significance: the aesthetic floats free,
purged of any ethical content." (Jukes 1990, p.112)

"In other words, contemporary designers of urban "public" space increasingly accept
signs and images of contact as more natural and desirable than contact itself. Public
and pseudopublic spaces perform a vital role in representational politics."
(Mitchell 2003a, p.141)

"So when it is said that the modern city is a place of excessive desire, of everyone
wanting too much, I begin to wonder whether the same formula may not be applied.
[…] maybe we don't desire enough." (Jukes 1990, p.113-114)

Jukes judges design and planning disciplines to be greatly responsible for the triviali-
sation of the cityscape. In discourse on the contribution of urban planners and architect's to
the city and city life, design is largely forgotten. Jukes is including designers in the discourse
only as a source of degeneration for the cityscape, partly fair partly not. I am grateful that
he at least recognizes some share in the making of city and city life, even if only negative.
Designers have to break the traditional codes of their disciplines as well as the traditional
boundaries of knowledge. As designers struggle for ways to lead viable professional lives,
they have to re-evaluate the system they are trained in and reproduce. Is the commodification
of urban public space the main reason for the involvement of design in its shaping? Jukes,
I believe, refers to this practice and an alternative reading of his texts might prove more
contextually critical than targeting designers as such.

"It strikes me that some of our planners need to acquire a more robust idea of city
life. Perhaps I do them an injustice, but I often have the feeling that their emphasis on
convenience, cleanliness, and safety, their distrust of everything vulgar and small
and poor, is symptomatic of a very lopsided view of urban culture." (B.J. Jackson
1997 [1957], p.27)

Earlier I mentioned the prospect of conflict arising in functioning public spaces. If we
accept the points of Jukes, Reijndorp and Hajer, we realize that "re-signing" meanings to
places to which the dominant groups of decision-makers (politicians, planning and design
experts, building and real estate capital, as well as often researchers of urban space) have
already assigned the overall meaning (be it function, aesthetics, forms, control, and so on)
can cause tensions. Authorities design and manage public spaces in order not to allow such
tensions to find a fertile ground. If tensions arise, conflicts can break out, then the system
runs into crises that also reveal its vulnerability. It is a suppressive system of intertwined

interests – reactive while trying to be proactive – that decides who has rightful presence in the city and to what degree.

Meanings and signs are thus ascribed and used to reinforce "the dominance of certain groups in the design of various public spaces," as Jukes observes. *Olohuone* re-signed, to use Jukes word play, different meanings within the particular few square meters of floor space in the West Hall of the Helsinki Railway Station. It certainly was a place of tension, as indeed bitterness and challenging emotions were stirred up in some people. Not everyone liked *Olohuone*, as two individuals personally declared to me. Wasn't there a tension manifested with the absence of Somali people? Being somewhat familiar with Somali customs, I would be totally naïve to expect Somali women to join *Olohuone*, to repose, to look at others and be looked at. However, there weren't even Somali men approaching the installation, despite my modest efforts to welcome a Somali presence. How can I interpret this fact? It seems to me that an already stigmatized group of citizens, displaced already in Diaspora, would rather avoid being part of a 'displacement' that seemed to have been quite successful with natives, including some homeless people. In this respect, why wouldn't Somali men join a place, just like any other citizen, within a context, the station, in which they already have a place?
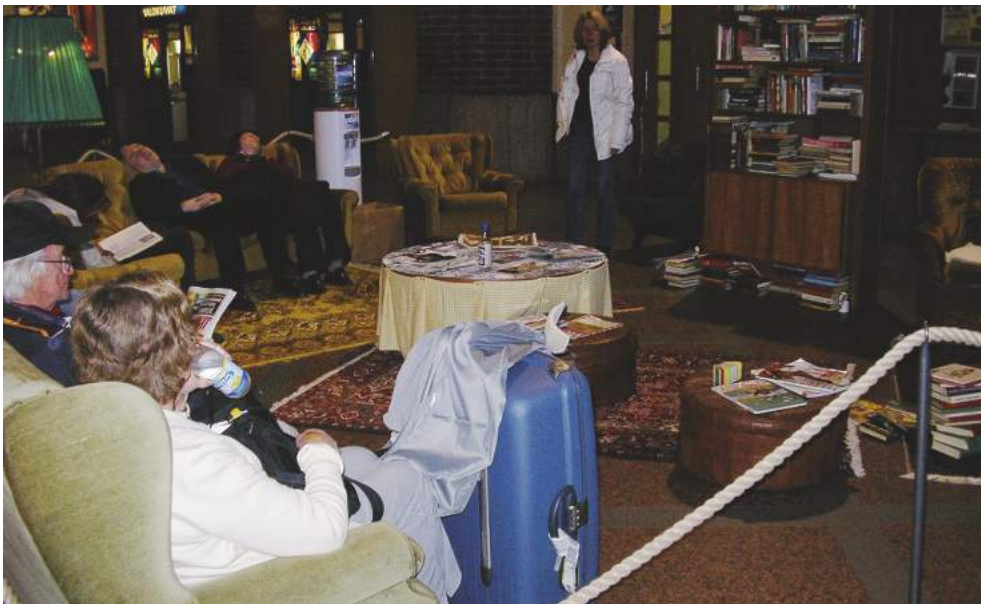
Helsinki Railway Station. *Olohuone*, 23.09.05, 07:00. Photo by Yelgin Mesci.

Despite my efforts to call upon the Somali presence at the station, *Olohuone* was a popular place for predominantly Finnish people, and as such it seems to me now that it would be in a naturally paradoxical way less welcoming to Somalis. The meanings I tried to ascribe were overwritten, and the new ones were clearly more appealing to certain groups and not others. There you have it, a soft urban intervention with supposedly simple

language was given to the public under conditions, and the dominant group who occupied it appropriated the place and its meanings. It is possible that I could have arranged a mini Somali poetry festival and still wouldn't have gotten much Somali presence. I cannot blame them; they weren't really involved in the organisation of this event, so why should they accept my invitation? Why should they become part of MY experiment, when many Somalis are admittedly reserved regarding all the research done about them without them, and all the interest they attract? Despite my good intentions, my call for a Somali presence was rather superficial; I see in retrospect that I may have been honest, but wasn't bold enough.

> "Public domain experiences occur at the boundary between friction and freedom. On the one hand there is always the tension of a confrontation with the unfamiliar; on the other, the liberation of the experience of a different approach. […] Public domain centers around experiencing cultural mobility: for the opportunity to see things differently, the presentation of new perspectives, as much as the confrontation with one's own time-worn patterns. Being coerced to conform does not tally with this perspective of a properly functioning public domain. Being challenged to relate to others does." (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.116)

Hajer and Reijndorp, above, describe my aspirations regarding *Olohuone* as a place to "see things differently." Furthermore, I am contemplative in regard to a deep political consciousness, and sense of responsibility that their ideas require on the part of architects, designers and planners, working for the creation of public space as a public domain. Architects, designers and planners are part and parcel of a reproductive model of societal norms and institutions. In other words, societies' normalizing forces build up a safe agenda for the formation of human resources that will eventually work for the longevity of the same norms that empowered them. Underlying is the human desire to be on the winning side, to be part of the decision-making rather than a critic and an outsider. Being with the 'winners' may require political affiliations to certain parties, which much too often leads to compromise. Compromising personal principles that may or may not comply with the normative societal rules is a decision-making that professionals from various fields have to deal with; among them, those who are held responsible for the formation of urban space. Somehow, designers and applied artists are left out of this dilemma; instead they are supposed to 'sell their souls' to market capital in order to contribute to its increase.

The critical discussion concerning design disciplines and the reproduction of societal norms is fundamental. I suggest that such a discussion should be approached as a political and ontological debate. The fact that politicians cherish "socially positive meetings of different kinds of citizens"[350] or a homogenizing spatial consensus doesn't mean that such space

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[350] Hajer & Reijndorp (2001, p.101).

is feasible, socially constructive or leads to sustainable cities. It is more a 'politically correct' desire that designers are called upon to fulfill. Parochialisation based on commercialisation, suppressive policies and control has proven to be a handy tool for materialising visions of 'harmonious urban living', a troubling illusion for those responsible for the formation of the cityscape, but seemingly very important in maintaining social law and order.

Olohuone was a caricature of a bourgeois place, brought out of context and given to strangers. There were aspirations, hopes and desires concerning the modes in which it could work. It was meant to attract all, but also to provide a place for the 'Other' of Helsinki. Ultimately it was occupied largely by Finns, and in principal not so much the 'Other'; Somalis who were a target group abstained. Despite my aspirations, fears and wishful thinking, despite even my good intentions, *Olohuone* turned out to have a life of its own through peoples' micro-appropriations. To think of something as one's own without an explicit permission, that is the kind of appropriation I am talking about. This is not a clear-cut process; it has nuances and engenders fears and negotiations about these fears. In a public setting, such as *Olohuone*, the appropriator exposes her/himself; it is both a weakening and empowering situation. The same can be said about the setting itself; Olohuone, in my mind, was on a constant verge of destruction by the very same appropriation I was wishing for.

> "When more social groups are involved in cultural appropriation of space, culture becomes a public good: it is not only a smokescreen for but also a means of clarifying and extending political conflicts over distributive justice. Vision, too, becomes not just a tool of cultural hegemony but a common property" (Zukin 1995, p.280)

Appropriation has turned out to be a valuable indicator for the success of a space, while limitation of the appropriative forces of people, or of certain people, remains a principal worry for city experts, designers and managers alike.

I discussed *Olohuone* as a place of tension, in retrospect I can say that indeed an overlapping of certain social realms took place, even if they weren't all the groups I had hoped for when planning the installation. My difficulty lay in the evaluation of cultural exchange, which I agree with Hajer and Reijndorp is a characteristic of a successful public space that then functions as a public domain. I have a difficulty quantifying cultural exchange, which to my understanding correlates with cultural appropriation. I did witness proximity and social contact between inhabitants of different social realms; however, other than the few first-hand confessions of some sort of shift of perspective, I cannot say positively that cultural exchange did take place at *Olohuone*. What I can say is that the place, with all its faults, was there for a shift of perspective to stand a chance.

Far in the Past, Ahead in the Future

In the spring of 2003 I presented my first conference paper at the 5th International Conference of the European Academy of Design, titled 'Techne. Design and Wisdom.' The title of my paper was 'Urban Public Space Design: Unwise Design and Social Exclusion.' It was a paper indicative of the exploring research phase I was going through, fundamentally vague, open and provocative. It wasn't provocative because of its genius, but because of its sincere frustration. How was it that through my architectural and design education the discussion of social aspects of design was so rudimentary? In my presentation I discussed a variety of discriminatory attitudes harboured in design by disregarding and not discussing *-isms* like sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, nationalism, religionism and so on.

I am quite sure that my presentation, which started with my live performance, was as elementary as my questions were basic. Deeply ontological in my naïveté and pretty bold because of it, I presented to a mostly academic audience of architects. After my presentation I was, all in all, patronised by one known architect, reprimanded by another teacher of architecture and then congratulated by a third one. I will say just a few more words about the reprimand. The middle-aged architect was a teacher of architecture to young students of 18-19 years of age. S/he got upset with my suggestion that all these –isms should require discussion and analysis with her/his young students, so that they too become more aware of their own prejudice. I recall my final sentence to our brief argument about my dissatisfaction with design education and practice: "stop designing and start thinking."

Olohuone was first conceived as an idea in 1997 and it was realised in 2005.

> "I loved Olohuone. Once I ran into it, I came back there whenever I could. Read books, browsed magazines, smiled at strangers. I have never felt that safe in a public place before or after. I would love to see such spaces everywhere, but on the other hand I know that the trappings of it (furniture, houselike feel) are secondary, that simply by changing one's attitude such feeling of relaxation and kinship could be achieved. Thank you." (Sunday, 29.4.2007, 19:52. Electronic mail.)

CONCLUSIONS

In what follows I will sum up the main elements and findings of this work. In addition I will present how this inquiry changed in the process. For my contribution to knowledge, I will rely on the value of my main claims. Finally, I will bring into the foreground research questions that may propose a certain *after-life* for this body of work. This is appropriate as I at the beginning of this work presented that two things were very important for the free citizens of the ancient Greek *polis*: the pursuit of excellence, while they were still in the world of the living, and the pursuit of honour and repute, while they had passed into the world of the dead.

Elements and Findings

My background and research interests seemed to meet and circumvent each other. In some instances my architectural knowledge advanced my research, and in others the sociological nature of my questions surfaced knowledge insufficiencies. Accepting such inefficiencies as surmountable, and the resulting hybrid character of the research as a whole, and of the research methodology in particular, creates risks worth taking. It is important to take such risks and expand disciplinary boundaries.

To the same line of thought and action (research) points the inquiry into the unquestionable. By discussing public and private as established entities one tends to disregard the *raison de être* of the dichotomy between these entities. Public and private are components of a continuum with boundaries that make increasingly less sense, as the meaning of public & private evolves and multiplies.[351] The decisions we make about the activities that take place in public or private, as I have shown in part 2, concern increasingly Hille Koskela's (2000) 'emotional space' or what could be seen as the political space in the work of Doreen Massey (1994) and Iris Marion Young (1990, 2002).[352]

The fact that despite the contestation over the boundaries between public and private these boundaries persist may be a sign of our masculinist conception of urban conditions. The physicality of how public and private are spatialised reproduces such boundaries.[353]

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[351] Cohen (1991) argues that, already since the Athenian *polis*, laws and norms institutionalise delimitations and fixed borders that everyday social practices often undermine.

[352] Massey (1994, chapter 11) registers the politicisation of space as a well founded debate in various disciplines. Such a debate needs further encouragement in design.

[353] This in addition was one of the conclusions of the Oslo Summer School 2005 course, *Urban Public Space and the Right to the City*, by Prof. Don Mitchell (Oslo, 29.07.2005).

Instead, the continuum of public and private points to the possibilities for change that these two conditions engender. The flexibility that such a continuum implies must be studied and possibly appreciated.

> "[…] I have examined various aspects of the urban problematic. However, one of the most disturbing problems still remains: the extraordinary passivity of the people most directly involved, those who are affected by projects, influenced by strategies. Why this silence on the part of 'users'? Why the uncertain mutterings about 'aspirations' –assuming anyone even bothers to consider them? What exactly is behind this strange situation? In this book I have criticised urbanism as ideology and institution, representation and will, pressure and repression, because it establishes a repressive space that is represented as objective, scientific, and neutral." (Lefebvre 2003, p.181)[354]

The importance of public space as *public* relies not only on the encounter with the 'Other,' or on the negotiation of our identities. It also relies on the affordance of such spaces in regard to the principles of diversity and the appreciation of difference.[355] In public spaces, the dominant groups often promote order and safety as a precondition for the sustenance of marginal voices (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001). Nevertheless, the democratisation of the public domain, the public sphere, and public space can be a viable option within a process of participatory polyphony.[356] In other words, the diversity accommodated in these public spaces must be inherent in their creation. This, in its turn, requires a whole different role for experts in the perception, conception and realisation of urban spaces. Learning to econceptualise public space we eventually must reconceptualise private space as well. Apartment blocks with common facilities for people to have the possibility of encounter and contact might need to be rearticulated.[357] The need for such facilities will increase in the future, due to the increased awareness of heterogeneous societies, wherein diverse groups become more visible. The "archipelago of enclaves" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p.53) projects a pacifying picture of diverse groups being apart but connected. For this inter-connection to occur there is the need for places wherein conflicts and interests can overlap and be

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354 I refer once again to Henri Lefebvre's *Urban Revolution* published originally in French in 1970. The English translation and publication came as late as 2003.

355 Affordance stands for the possibilities for action that a place permits.

356 "[…] we can conclude that the idea of an egalitarian, multicultural society only makes sense if we suppose a plurality of public arenas in which groups with diverse values and rhetorics participate. By definition, such a society must contain a multiplicity of publics. However, this need not preclude the possibility of an additional, more compre-

hensive arena in which members of different more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity."
(Fraser 1992, p.126)

357 The term "facilities" stands for *facilitators*, as it is not only a common room that as a facility in an apartment block may create opportunities to meet our next-door neighbour (stranger) but also an art work, or a garden project, a water dispenser, a regular and good reason to party, etc.

358 Prof. Iain Borden said that urban conflicts may arise about the appropriation of public spaces by *different*

negotiated;[358] not judicial or disciplinary spaces but inclusive spaces.

There are certain civic spaces that are not discussed in this work. Buildings housing public services, such as libraries, schools and universities, health care centres, churches, cultural centres, operas and concert halls, post offices and so on, are important for the establishment of welfare states. These are institutions based on the notion of public service. Such public spaces are important for the individual's well being, as well as for the creation of a sense of community or national identity. These spaces may facilitate a shift of perspective to occur; however, they are pervaded by authoritarian hierarchies, top-down decision making, and they often require and instruct passive participation (client-consumer-*consumption*). In such a context, appropriations and affordances that provide possibilities for dissent should be eradicated. Civic spaces, while offering vital services for the city inhabitants, do so in patterns of often institutionalised discrimination. Therefore, such spaces are not necessarily functioning public spaces of a diverse *cosmopolis* but rather of a city with induced homogeneity.[359] Along with this criticism comes the realisation that in the neo-liberal era of the managerialisation of city space, civic places are likely to face deterioration due to their high expenses and low turnover; therefore, appreciating their social importance we must re-evaluate and re-invest in civic spaces for our increasingly diverse societies.

The notion of appropriation of public space is paramount concerning 'open-minded' urban spaces that do facilitate diversity and a shift of perspective to occur. The potential for appropriation is inherent in public space. It is the unknown people who eventually decide to appropriate a space, neither the space as such nor the designers; however, it is the design configuration that hinders and controls such a potential. In the Helsinki Railway Station, free resting facilities are scarce, however the people targeted by such measures appropriately find ways to be present in the space. Somali men, youngsters, non consumers and non commuters, the homeless or the inebriated, find ways to bypass restrictions imposed by spatial design and management, giving headaches to security guards and the administration. Appropriation seems to be the only strategy for the social 'Other' to be in public, and it need not be any *loud* demonstration of existence. It is sufficient to blend in the flowing crowds among waiting commuters, or to peek at the newspapers as the Albanian men do standing in *that* particular corner of Omonia Square in Athens.

The way we work with the concept of appropriation of public space is partial and biased, based on the stereotypical fear of the unknown. The ways the public space of a city is perceived, experienced and acted upon – appropriated – by transnational migrants,

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people doing different things at the same time. Public Space Seminar, KIASMA museum of modern art. Helsinki, 28 October 2005.

359 I refer here to the analysis of Weintraub (1997) concerning the city implied by Arendt's and Ariès' perceptions of public. Weintraub (1997, p. 26) thereafter contrasts polis "[...] which both allows and requires that they [citizens] act together and deliberate explicitly about collective outcomes" and the diverse cosmopolis which is *not* a political community.

defines the multicultural physiognomy of a city, and the public face of the 'Other' within the city. Traditions, state policies, circumstances, power struggles and interests, all influence and shape public space, its physicality and its symbolism(s). A variety of expertise from different fields is involved in the shaping and experience of public space. The decisions concerning public space are political, particularly in the field of design, which traditionally has demonstrated few political aspirations. As we show in the case of Omonia Square in Athens and its alleged 'Albanisation,' spatial discrimination against immigrants is an outcome and expression of a discriminatory normative system. It isn't receptive or inclusive when the majority's perception is the point of reference for all the *rest* to find a position in society. Any group of the 'Other' in our cities may find it difficult to participate in public life as equals.

> "[…] concrete space has been replaced with abstract space. Concrete space is the space of habiting: gestures and paths, bodies and memory, symbols and meanings, the difficult maturation of the immature-premature (of the 'human being'), contradictions and conflicts between desires and needs, and so forth. This concrete content, time inscribed space, an unconscious poiesis that misunderstands its own conditions, is also misunderstood by thought. Instead, it takes off into the abstract space of vision, of geometry. The architect who draws and the urbanist who composes a block plan look down on their 'objects,' buildings and neighbourhoods, from above and afar. These designers and draftsmen move within a space of paper and ink. Only after this nearly complete *reduction* of the everyday do they return to the scale of lived experience. They are convinced they have captured it even though they carry out their plans and projects within a second-order abstraction. They've shifted from lived experience to the abstract, projecting this abstraction back onto lived experience. This twofold substitution and negation creates an illusory sense of affirmation: the return to 'real' life. In this way the blinding-blinded operates on a field that may appear to be illuminated but is in fact blind." (Lefebvre 2003, p.182-3)

A society that with its policies proves to be exclusive against peoples of different race, faith or nationality, is most likely to be exercising a wider spectrum of discriminations; urban public space materialises such policies. Designers should be aware of this and the political implications of their design gestures. There are no recipes or manuals on how to plan, realise and sustain inclusive public space; however, there is a great body of practice-based knowledge from Portland to Dar es Salaam that experts need to become familiar with. I claim that designers need to open up and take advantage of the knowledge of other fields studying urban life, and vice versa, as all may benefit from a mutual enrichment. There is a tremendous body of knowledge that we are unaware of. Within rigid normative frameworks, many of those who are aware face the challenge of how to translate social theories into design practice. This criti-

cism of experts and rigid frameworks may project the wrong idea that experts are compliant, socially short-sighted, and overprotective of their professional credibility. Experts are agents of change whose moral dilemmas oscillate from resisting neo-liberalism to partly or fully adapting to it. The criticism in this work addresses the adaptive processes of consent to discriminatory social-spatial practices.

Living in contemporary cities where tensions and conflicts occur, and trying to create un-edgy societal contexts and homogeneous cities can be a very good way to materialize certain politicians' wishful thinking; however, it doesn't alleviate the various discriminations in education, employment, public expression and the rights to the city. Leonie Sandercock and John Forester discuss the models of planners who are increasingly in demand in order to respond constructively to the challenges of urban diversity. If Sandercock's radical planner is the creator of the public space that Martin Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp describe, then I believe that a transdisciplinary approach in the design of public space is fundamental. Designers need to partake in the discourse on urban phenomena, to train in deliberative practices, and to listen to the voices rarely heard. This is a very complex and difficult role for designers to take on. Nevertheless, it is crucial that as much as design education becomes more integrated with industrial and fiscal parameters of life, it must equally provide the platforms for alternative ways of thought. It is similarly crucial to analyse the wider social consequences of such industrial and fiscal parameters, for social awareness and a sense of responsibility to evolve as *requirements* for the production of urban space and not as romantic albeit reactionary virtues.

As researchers we must engage in action sooner or later in our research. Being in the field, interviewing, observing, interacting and experimenting opened my eyes in more than one ways. The experience of *Olohuone* enabled me to intervene in one field of my research, namely the station, and create a case study. A finding that *Olohuone* presented me with is that designers, like me, trained in configuring space for certain functions, are distrustful of the unexpected. Since unknown strangers carry the potential of surprise, we distrust them; therefore, we *a priory* think and act in order to expel, if not the unknown stranger, at least the potential for surprise, or what I earlier called *appropriation*. In *Olohuone*, the *public* caring for the arrangement supported it, thus proving my fears exaggerated and enabling an appreciation of the *unknown*. Active participation in the research field has the potential to open the doors of our consciousness and sensitise us further to the object of our study. Talking about urban public space, in this case, proves impossible outside the context of people and social inclusion/exclusion.

My case studies of Helsinki and Athens placed my questions in perspective and contextualised my research in such a way that comparisons were vain. It is similarly unproductive to compare situations based solely on the marker of national identity. My effort to present nuances related to national self-perception in the context of Finland and Greece is valuable as far as it regards each context by itself. When I try to make comparisons, impartiality is almost unattainable and the comparison turns sour. Instead

each case has stories to tell, and according to one's predisposition, conclusions can be drawn. The field of the station in Helsinki motivated me to work on the conditions of Finnish welfare, and the critical analysis of managerial and design gestures pointed to the fact that polices reflect as much as influence the welfarist ideals. Thus, the Finnish welfare society lost for me its mythic character and it became 'fleshier.' When I write earlier that urban policies may hinder the socio-spatial integration of transnational people and other marginalised groups, even if they are supposedly based on consensus, I am referring to the Finnish context. Frequently I pondered on the question: is it realistic to think of functioning public spaces in a society like the Finnish one? The question isn't offensive; it is a sign of a wider internal discourse about social inclusion, socio-spatial integration, and equal rights and opportunities for the expression of the public faces of minorities in a country that is traditionally considered to be homogeneous and rural. Foreigners, particularly from warmer climates, often complain about the coldness of Finnish people. Certain urban circumstances could, but did not, guide me to the conclusion that Finns don't need what I am describing throughout this study as spaces of functioning public domain.

The case study of Omonia Square in Athens helped me appreciate each context as such, and look for nuances and less for generalities.[360] Finnish urban policies, following international trends, revolve around security and fiscal longevity. The Finnish Information society has proven to be quite a forceful developing machine for the whole country, and a commodity to be guarded by all means. Somewhere along the way the human factor loses its priority. Uneven distribution of wealth accelerates socio-spatial exclusion and the people who suffer most are those who the urban policies, one way or another, want to discipline and control: transnational men and women, ethnic youth, poor elderly people, homeless people, ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities, less eager consumers, and disable bodies. In the case of Finland, urban policies are positive regarding socio-spatial inclusion, and integration. Here the key for urban peace is not segregation, as in certain parts of the world, but integration. Despite the aspirations of the authorities, though, segregation exists and it concerns unattractive postal codes as much as it concerns stigmatised and stigmatising public spaces. In addition the expression of the public face of groups of the 'Other,' and a positive and vocal acknowledgment of their rights to the city, are lacking. Finland is a pioneering country with a welfare state that supports society with *popular* libraries, sports facilities, green cities and warm houses in the cold winters. Civic spaces are essential for Finnish people. These spaces are part and parcel of the welfare state, and bear the reproductive DNA of Finnish identity. Although such spaces are important for contributing to the high standards of living and are popular, as Leena Eräsaari

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[360] Despite this, I made generalisations complying with the demand for answers even when what mostly interested me were the questions.

(1994) shows about street level bureaucracies in Finland, they also induce a consensual silence.[361] However, instead of asking if Finnish people are capable of a full-fledged public domain, I ponder on how to challenge the norms of urban public space so that people may unfold their own alternatives without the driving force of consumerism or clientelism.[362]

The case study of Omonia Square in Athens brought me face to face with the qualities of being Greek, some of which have mutated according to an alleged international bastard-isation and some of which are plainly muted under the pressure for economic development and profitability.[363] The enquiry into Omonia Square shows that in a hybrid liberal welfare state like the Greek one, where ancestral accomplishments lay forgotten in ruins while nostalgia has beautified the past, the present is officially absent. The denial of the state to strategically and discursively integrate the 'Other' in Greece culminates the tensions and conflicts over equal rights and opportunities for representation in the public sphere and in public spaces. The policies are fragmentary, the strategies are inconsistent, and the enduring lack of multiparty cooperation has blanketed the country with stratification. Behind the Greeks' aspirations to the European Union, in many respects a jesture of international conformity and the self-perception of a homogenous people, lies the other side of the story.

This is a country where numerous ethnic and religious minorities have long existed and still today suffer socio-spatial discrimination, whose capital, Athens, suffers from chaos in the event of the countless demonstrations taking place, where transnational people such as Albanians are criminalised just because of their nationality. This is also a place where public spaces thrive, where conflicts are enacted publicly, violently and with casualties, where public political gatherings sustain high numbers of followers crowding squares and streets, and where planning legislation has an official albeit illegal partner, namely *para-urbanism*. In this *do it yourself* public domain, with authorities and policies opposing inclusion and appreciation of social diversity, the only way to proceed is to fight for one's rights to the city. Here insurgent practices and hindered social imagination, manifest the existence of the lesser people whose voices are seldom heard. I am not solely talking about the heroism of the unknown public; I am talking in addition about the carnivorous Greek media who have endorsed so profoundly the big brother mentality. The majority of Greek mass media endlessly feed the

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361 "In offices where people in both roles – as clients and officials – find it difficult to use expressions like 'excuse me' or 'could you please', the means of regulating clients' behaviour which do not require oral communication will seem more natural. I would thus suggest that controlling clients' behaviour by regulating concrete access to places, and applying solutions based on 'space and things', may be the kind of 'parlance' suitable for 'mute' people." (Eräsaari 1994, p.204).

362 Such consumerism refers to alcohol consumption as much as it refers to the consumption of meanings and slogans (for example the Reclaim the Streets annual event). In this sense I don't condemn it, but I don't consider a pub-

lic festival sponsored by a vodka label that offers cheap drinks to be anything more then a promotional event. And as much as I don't condemn the enjoyable annual ethnic food festivals in Helsinki for promoting a limited edition of multiculturalism, I still don't endorse them as capable of causing a shift of perspective and expressing social and cultural diversity publicly.

363 The idea that globalisation corrupts national virtues in favour of a socially insensitive accumulation of wealth.

public consciousness with populist urban misery, to a degree that antiracist demonstrations without hospitalised casualties are gatherings of small importance, while a pupil of Albanian origin carrying the Greek flag at a Greek school parade makes headlines.

Change is as necessary as it is scary. If Lefebvre's testimony[364] is right, then it cannot be otherwise than that the people whose vocation it is to shape those spaces must change their operative frameworks. Sustainable policies and evolving legislation require a cradle-to-grave approach of pedagogic education towards an appreciation of difference. The people who undertake the design and management of urban space need to be aware of reproducing the vicious circle of dominance, power and human suffering. Furthermore, for social justice to stand a chance it is vital that our living spaces change to be more inclusive too.

If indeed design can contribute to the creation of spaces functioning as public domain, then what I propose is a qualitative approach to urban life, similar to "human flourishing." Human flourishing

> "[…] expresses a concern for ourselves and our fellow citizens, that we should all flourish, limited only by respect for each other's right to flourish and by local and global considerations of sustainability […]. Some living places are easy to navigate and rich in resources for support and enhancement. Others are an obstacle course of hurdles and barriers, environmental and social contaminations which undermine physical and mental health and the development of aspirations. In this context, social exclusion could mean being cut out of opportunities to live with people and in places which enhance the chance of flourishing, in whatever way people may want to flourish."
> (Healey 1998, p.60)

Changes

Some of the changes that occurred to this research are evident between the lines above. The action research part of this project was conceived near the end of the research process. In a period when my funding was scarce, only grants for field trips, conferences and an art installation were fruitful. The installation was an unrealised idea from the past, and it was materialised in a period of six months. At the end of that period, and reflecting upon *Olohuone*, many new elements infiltrated my work, principally a respect for the *unknown public*. It is due to this experience that I would urge researchers to decide on their own action field and make the best of it.

An important change that occurred already at the early stages of this research was the focal shift from urban public spaces and the things within it to the people occupying such spaces and using the things in it. Thus, a potentially strictly-speaking "design research" took on social questions.

A further change that occurred was my *passage* from being supervised to being unsupervised and then supervised again though by different people. The period of the most notable awakening was when I was researching and studying unsupervised. It was a frustrating period, as well as exceptionally active and fruitful. I contemplated and decided to conduct discussions with stake holders of public spaces in Helsinki and Athens. It was in this period that I became more vocal and presented my research in conferences and seminars.

The change of rhythm or pace of the research was a characteristic consequence of fluctuations concerning funding. Although this research was essentially conducted with the support of numerous foundations, that support was consistent neither in duration nor in quantity. This fact decisively determined at quite a few instances my options, namely what was feasible and when. In a few cases the funding was actually guiding my focus. In a few instances the continuation of this research seemed at stake due to unfavourable circumstances. Justifiably or not, then, the research focused more on matters of justice, pluralism and inclusion, and it became more agonistic.

This work is my contribution to the discussion about socio-spatial discrimination in European urban centres, and particularly in Helsinki and Athens. I do not claim that I am a researcher/activist the way Hoggart et al (2002, p. 292) describe it: "Action Research is associated with learning about society through efforts to change it." Nevertheless, through this research I have grown the ambition to provoke or inspire change. Prior to my research in the Finnish and Greek context, I often considered nationally marked mentalities and chauvinism as the scapegoats for many shortcomings of a society. Recently, however, the role of policies has become clearer.

History and traditions are important; however policy-making reflects and moulds at the same time our perceptions of others and of ourselves. Therefore, the role of strategic planning, and the possibilities for a radical urbanism, are vital concerning the ways urban development takes place, as well as who are included and who are excluded in this process. Politicians of the left and the right demonstrate opposing and also shifting views of public and private, for instance concerning rights to publicness, or to individual freedoms. Such views matter and should be scrutinised.[365] Politics is not so abstract anymore, and earlier political aspirations, concerning this whole work, have given place to a certainty that researching public space means researching the ways politics influence our private and public lives, as well as the ways we influence the body politic.

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[364] That in order for a society to advance in prosperity and humanity the spaces that house it must change.

[365] Alan Wolfe (1997) analyses the political practices of the North American left and right over the *public* and the *private*. He explains that divisions shift and perspectives swing in order to comply with citizen's struggles for rights, along with forces to reassert public morality. Wolfe concludes that although in the US the private seems to prevail over public in issues of economy and morality a reversal might be eminent as well as a realisation that public and private are intertwined.

Claims

In this body of work I have claimed that spatial design and management contribute in the social discrimination of certain groups of stake holders in the city. Their rights to express a public face, to engage in public life equally, and potentially appropriate city space, can and is perpetually hindered by policies that promote imposed models of urban bliss. These often consensual models work at the expense of social diversity, social justice, and the transparency and openness of negotiating urban rights and obligations.

The case studies provide contexts for critical analysis interpretable in various ways. I claim that the imperative of the Finnish welfare state is betrayed by the planning and practice of a multitude of anti-segregation policies that indeed create the conditions for socio-spatial discrimination, and limit the possibilities for a constructive public dialogue on justice for a sustainable diverse society. The fear of conflict pervades the public domain and consensus silences those whose right to the city is ambiguous. Urban public space controlled against deviance gives in to a theme-park like spontaneity, or a shopping mall's sociability.

I claim that the shortcomings of the Greek fragmentary policies on social diversity and inclusion have transformed the urban centres into "war" grounds where the insurgencies of subaltern counterpublics seem to be the only response to social injustices. The public domain seems unfriendly and chaotic where conflicts are rarely negotiated but often expressed publicly and, unfortunately, even violently. Urban public space appropriated by the 'Other' also, poses a threat to the 'Greekness' of the city and gives in to gentrification, not easily, though, nor silently.

I claim that designers should learn more about, and work more with the social 'Other,' those who designers are very often called on to remove from public space.
I finally claim that design can and is changing the social face of the grounds it operates in. Working for inclusive and diverse societies means, in addition, designing for inclusive and diverse cities.

The social and spatial are inextricably linked.

Further Research Questions

"How could the user not feel excluded from the dialogue (assuming there is dialogue) between the architect and the urbanist? Sometimes these are found in the same individual, sometimes they are separate, and sometimes they disagree. Frequently, they establish a contract, a quasi contract, or a gentlemen's agreement between them. What is the best situation for the user? A not-too-violent conflict between these two individuals. How often is the user present to take advantage of

this circumstance? Rarely. Who is the user? It's as if they (the skilled, the agents, the authorities) had so excluded *use* for the sake of *exchange* that this use came to be confused with usury. So how is the user perceived? As a fairly repulsive character who soils whatever is sold to him new and fresh, who breaks, who causes wear, who fortunately fulfils the function of making the replacement of a thing inevitable, who successfully carries out the process of obsolescence. Which is hardly an excuse." (Lefebvre 2003, p.188)

Olohuone taught me that the experts of urban space deserve an opportunity to acquire knowledge on the everyday conditions of the unknown public. If it is our job to partly shape the physical space of the city, then it is a part of our vocation too to partly shape social space. We are not alone in this task; apart from other experts we must work with the stranger. Only then may we have a chance to build an appreciation of, and trust for, people other than the welcome participants of our microcosms; therein lies the potential of diversity, but only if we embrace it.

A couple of eminent research questions then persist: How do we practice social diversity? How do we incorporate socially informed theory in design practice?
Only a systematic effort can bear fruits. This research has revealed the necessity of such an effort. *Olohuone* unfolded the possibilities of ethnomethodologically informed field work. In other words, the potential of a shift of perspective is needed in public space, as much as it is needed in us. As I have shown, an effort like the one described above is not pioneering. Instead, people have carried out projects dealing constructively with the building of public domain and public spaces inclusive to diversity. These projects rarely produce glossy star architecture or headlines. Here lies another on-going question: how can we enquire into such projects and then communicate them not only to students but also to the wider public? Such projects are stereotypically considered to be 'good' and therefore 'small news.'

"[…] we need only mention the growing number of authorities, skills, services, and offices associated with the separate 'elements' of urban reality. Here, too, the only limits the bureaucrat and bureaucratic fragmentation encounter are internal. These continue to proliferate until they stop functioning, caught up in the inextricable interlocking of skills that are themselves localized in offices. This situation would be comic if it didn't imply a practice: the segregation, projected onto the terrain, of a*ll the isolated elements of the whole*." (Lefebvre 2003, p.187)

It has been a challenge to focus on a certain group suffering socio-spatial discrimina-tion in the city. The fact of the matter is that socio-spatial discrimination varies in response to different contexts; however, in principle and in its vengefulness, it remains the same.

There is a richness of resources regarding groups of stake holders suffering socio-spatial discrimination in the cities. Despite that, I discovered that the necessary bridges aren't there between this body of knowledge and design. Some successful cases remain exceptions that confirm the norm of the incompatibility between the social and the spatial, even more in practice than in theory.[366] How do we, then, make this decisive leap from social awareness and engagement, which are less politically idealistic, to a more pragmatic approach? How can pragmatic be poetic without being mélo? This research has shown me that one way is to immerse ourselves in the poetry of the everyday.[367] In increasingly diversified societies demanding diversified public domain, spheres and spaces, how can we work to balance our need for private comfort without 'commodifying' and commercialising public space?

In Western societies we have to deal with the decreasing participation of stake holders in the common affairs and negotiations of rights and obligations. In such a socio-political climate, how can designers stir up the necessary participation for urban public spaces functioning as public domain? If appropriation is of an ambiguous nature for design experts and spatial managers, how can we realistically create spaces that invite interaction, not only with the space itself and the things in it, but also among people? How do we *include* when we subsidize artworks, when we accept that we make a diverse society?[368] Is it then fundamental to respond to the need for different public places as facilitators for the presence of mutually acknowledging subaltern counterpublics?

I have shown some of the ways exclusion causes socio-spatial discrimination, and Don Mitchell in his work has demonstrated the violation of the right of homeless people in the North American city. How may designers and policy makers find ways to learn from

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[366] Most of my discussions with experts reveal this gap.

[367] "Couldn't the passivity of those who inhabit, who could and should 'dwell poetically' (Hölderin), be compared to the strange impasse that architectural and urbanist thought has come up against? It is as if their project were under the influence of some strange curse. It seems that the only progress they have made involves the use of graphics and technology. The imagination is hampered in its flight." (Lefebvre 2003, p.181-2)

[368] In my research I have not dealt with urban art activism that is a form of appropriation of urban public space. Nevertheless, I consider political rather than decorative street art to be one of the most inspiring ways of doing art and urban interventions. Apart from some known artists, like Banksy, there are countless low-profile artists-activists agitating authorities, and commenting on corporate impunity, public media, or urban loneliness.
"The meaning of the artwork is 'open your eyes and observe', 'love your neighborhood.' He [Eltono, street artist in Madrid] tries to bring art to places where people are

not used to seeing it. [...] Regarding the future of street art, Eltono sees future for people, who work in the street in an artistic and conceptual way. 'It's not about graphic design street promotion, it's about art out of the canvas boundaries, using the city as an urban background." (C100 2006, p.78)
"More recently he [Asbestos, a street artist in Dublin] has been photographing homeless people and then painting their portraits on discarded pieces of wood which are put back on the streets. These portraits capture their lonely silent dignity that's often ignored by society." (C100 2006, p.134)
"Dr. D [street art activist in London] has spent the last five years taking her revenge on the corporations, that led her down this ill fated path [she has been researching a vaccination technique for global pharmaceuticals who profiteered] Using cut and paste style, Dr. D is now working for you. If you have a problem with a corporation, if nobody else will help you, and if you can find her, maybe you can hire Dr. D." (C100 2006, p.160)

such knowledge, surpass the surface, and reach the profound conditions of living together with strangers we don't necessarily like but who do not harm us either? It is a big challenge. However I am hopeful, because ordinary people undertake this challenge every day. From small personal revolutions to major policy shifts, social imagination surpasses rigid boundaries.

The exceptional and the ordinary are inextricably linked.

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[369] All the material is archived. The names of the interlocutors and informants are withheld.